



SpectraMax[®] i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform

with the SpectraMax[®] MiniMax[™] Imaging Cytometer

User Guide

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Safety Information

The safety information section provides information on the safe use of the instrument, including the use of user-attention statements in this guide, a key to understanding the safety labels on the instrument, precautions to follow before operating the instrument, and precautions to follow while operating the instrument.

Please read and observe all warnings, cautions, and instructions. Remember, the most important key to safety is to operate the instrument with care.



WARNING! If the instrument is used in a manner not specified by Molecular Devices, the protection provided by the equipment might be impaired.

Warnings, Cautions, Notes, and Tips

All warning symbols in the user guide are framed within a yellow triangle. An exclamation mark is used for most warnings. Other symbols can warn of other types of hazards such as biohazard, electrical, or laser safety warnings as are described in the text of the warning.

When warnings and cautions are displayed in this guide, be careful to follow the specific safety information related to them.

The following user-attention statements can be displayed in the text of Molecular Devices user documentation. Each statement implies a particular level of observation or recommended procedure as described:



WARNING! A warning indicates a situation or operation that could cause personal injury if precautions are not followed.



CAUTION! A caution indicates a situation or operation that could cause damage to the instrument or loss of data if correct procedures are not followed.



Note: A note calls attention to significant information.

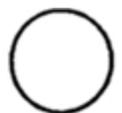


Tip: A tip provides useful information or a shortcut, but is not essential to the completion of a procedure.

Symbols on Instrument Labels

Each safety label located on the instrument contains an alert symbol that indicates the type of potential safety hazard related to the label. The following table lists the alert symbols that can be found on Molecular Devices instruments.

Table S-1: Instrument Label Alert Symbols

Symbol	Indication
	This warning symbol indicates that the product documentation needs to be consulted.
	This warning symbol indicates a laser hazard. The instrument is rated a Class 1 Laser Product because it can house one or more laser modules, and the laser light cannot be accessed. See Laser Safety on page 10 .
	This warning symbol indicates a potential lifting hazard. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument. For information about the weight of the instrument, see Physical Specifications on page 189 .
	This symbol on the power switch indicates power on. See Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80 .
	This symbol on the power switch indicates power off. See Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80 .
	<p>This symbol on the product is required in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive of the European Union. It indicates that you must not discard this electrical or electronic product or its components in domestic household waste or in the municipal waste collection system.</p> <p>For products under the requirement of the WEEE directive, please contact your dealer or local Molecular Devices office for the procedures to facilitate the proper collection, treatment, recovery, recycling, and safe disposal of the device.</p>

Before Operating the Instrument

Make sure that everyone involved with the operation of the instrument has:

- Received instruction in general safety practices for laboratories.
- Received instruction in specific safety practices for the instrument.
- Read and understood all Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all materials being used.

Electrical Safety

To prevent electrically related injuries and property damage, properly inspect all electrical equipment before use and immediately report all electrical deficiencies. Contact Molecular Devices technical support for servicing of equipment that requires the removal of covers or panels.



WARNING! HIGH VOLTAGE. Within the instrument is the potential of an electrical shock hazard existing from a high voltage source. All safety instructions should be read and understood before proceeding with the installation, maintenance, and servicing of all modules.

Do not remove the instrument covers. To prevent electrical shock, use the supplied power cords only and connect to a properly grounded wall outlet. Use only multi-plug power strips that are provided by the manufacturer.

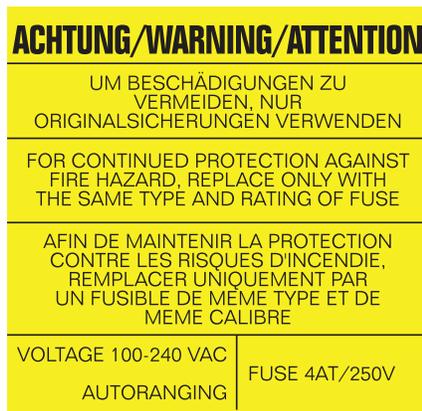


Figure S-1: Fuse Warning Label on the Rear of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform

To protect against fire hazard, replace the fuses only with the same type and rating as the original factory-installed fuses. See [Replacing Fuses on page 168](#).

To ensure sufficient ventilation and provide access for disconnecting power from the instrument, maintain a 20 cm to 30 cm (7.9 in. to 11.8 in.) gap between the rear of the instrument and the wall.

Laser Safety



WARNING! LASER LIGHT. This symbol indicates that a potential hazard to personal safety exists from a laser source. When this symbol is displayed in this guide, be careful to follow to the specific safety information related to the symbol.

The SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform is rated a Class 1 Laser Product because it can house one or more laser modules, and the laser light cannot be accessed.

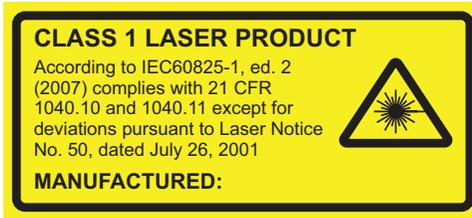


Figure S-2: Laser Label on the Rear of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform

The SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform is equipped with a redundant laser safety system. A hardware interlock prevents the laser module from turning on, unless the microplate chamber flap is closed and the front cover of the detection cartridge drawer is in place. The user or the service engineer is not exposed to radiation from the laser module during operation, maintenance, or service. The closed microplate chamber provides the protective housing.



WARNING! LASER LIGHT. The instrument must be operated only when all the doors and panels of the instrument are in place and closed.

Laser or Laser Diodes in Detection Cartridges

Some detection cartridges can have a laser or laser diode up to Laser Class 4 inside the detection cartridge. The lasers are non-operational until after the detection cartridges are properly installed in the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform.

Laser in the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer has a Laser Class 2 laser inside the instrument, but is rated a Class 1 Laser Product because the laser light cannot be accessed.



Figure S-3: Laser Label on the Rear of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

The laser is non-operational until after the cytometer is properly installed on the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform.



Figure S-4: Laser Label on the Bottom of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform

The optics-access cover on the bottom of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform has a hardware interlock that prevents the laser module from turning on, unless the cover is in place. The installed cover closes the protective housing.

Chemical and Biological Safety

Normal operation of the instrument can involve the use of materials that are toxic, flammable, or otherwise biologically harmful. When using such materials, observe the following precautions:

- Handle infectious samples based on good laboratory procedures and methods to prevent the spread of disease.
- Observe all cautionary information printed on the original containers of solutions before their use.
- Dispose of all waste solutions based on the waste disposal procedures of your facility.
- Operate the instrument in accordance with the instructions outlined in this guide, and take all the necessary precautions when using pathological, toxic, or radioactive materials.
- Splashing of liquids can occur. Therefore, take applicable safety precautions, such as using safety glasses and wearing protective clothing, when working with potentially hazardous liquids.
- Use a correctly contained environment when using hazardous materials.
- Use a compressed gas supply in a well-ventilated area. The instrument is not air-tight, and so gas can escape into the atmosphere surrounding the instrument. When using potentially toxic gas, always observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer to maintain a safe working environment.
- Observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer when using flammable solvents in or near a powered-up instrument.
- Observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer when using toxic, pathological, or radioactive materials.



WARNING! Never do operations on the instrument in an environment where potentially damaging liquids or gases are present.



CAUTION! Use of organic solvents (such as dichloromethane) can cause harm to the optics in the instrument. Extreme caution is recommended when using organic solvents. Always use a plate lid and do not place a plate containing these materials in the microplate chamber for prolonged periods of time. Damage caused by the use of incompatible or aggressive solvents is NOT covered by the instrument warranty.

Moving Parts Safety

To prevent injury due to moving parts, observe the following:

- Never try to exchange labware, reagents, or tools while the instrument is operating.
- Never try to physically restrict the moving components of the instrument.
- Keep the instrument work area clear to prevent obstruction of the movement. Provide clearance in the front of the instrument of 18 cm (7.1 in.) for the microplate drawer and 15 cm (5.9 in.) for the detection cartridge drawer.

 **CAUTION!** To prevent damage to the instrument, the microplate height and read height must be set accurately before starting a read. If the microplate is lidded, you must select **Is Lidded** in the **Settings** dialog and make sure that the microplate height with a lid is set accurately in the **Plate Editor** before starting a read. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Transport locks are placed on the detection cartridge drawer and the microplate drawer to protect the instrument from damage during shipping. Transport locks must be removed before powering on the instrument.



Figure S-5: Temporary Warning Label On Power Switch

To move the microplate drawer or the detection cartridge drawer into or out of the instrument, always use the buttons on the keypad or the controls in the software. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#) or [Using Detection Cartridges on page 84](#).

 **CAUTION!** To prevent damage to the installed detection cartridges and the instrument, do not manually slide the detection cartridge drawer in or out when the instrument is powered on or when one or more detection cartridges are installed in the drawer.



Figure S-6: Warning Label Behind the Detection Cartridge Drawer Cover



Note: Observe all warnings and cautions listed for all external devices attached to or in use during the operation of the instrument. See the applicable user guide for the operating and safety procedures of that device.

Cleaning and Maintenance Safety

Observe the cleaning procedures outlined in this user guide for the instrument.

Do the following before cleaning equipment that has been exposed to hazardous material:

- Contact the applicable Chemical and Biological Safety personnel.
- Review the Chemical and Biological Safety information contained in this user guide.

Do only the maintenance described in this guide. Maintenance procedures other than those specified in this guide should be done only by Molecular Devices service engineers.



WARNING! BIOHAZARD. It is your responsibility to decontaminate components of the instrument before requesting service by a service engineer or returning parts to Molecular Devices for repair. Molecular Devices will not accept items that have not been decontaminated where it is applicable to do so. If parts are returned, they must be enclosed in a sealed plastic bag stating that the contents are safe to handle and are not contaminated.

For approved cleaning and maintenance procedures, see [Maintenance and Troubleshooting on page 165](#).

The SpectraMax® i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform from Molecular Devices® is a monochromator-based, multi-mode detection platform. An external computer running the SoftMax® Pro provides integrated instrument control, data display, and statistical data analysis.

The built-in read modes include:

- UV and Visible Absorbance (ABS), see [Absorbance Read Mode on page 25](#).
- Fluorescence Intensity (FL), see [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#).
- Luminescence (LUM), see [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications. Up to four detection cartridges can be installed in the detection cartridge drawer. For information about detection cartridges, see [Available Detection Cartridges on page 129](#).

For most read modes, endpoint, kinetic, multi-point well-scan, and spectrum microplate applications can be set up and run with the SoftMax Pro Software.

For more information on the supported read types, see the following topics:

- [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Spectrum Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Membrane Read Type on page 24](#)

The SpectraMax® MiniMax™ Imaging Cytometer adds imaging capability to the SpectraMax i3 Instrument to visually inspect your sample and to run cell-based assays at cellular or whole-cell resolution. See [SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer on page 91](#).

Depending on the application, the instrument can read 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, and 384-well microplates. For micro-volume measurements, the instrument supports SpectraDrop 24-well micro-volume microplates and SpectraDrop 64-well micro-volume microplates. The instrument is capable of reading 1536-well microplates when used with specific detection cartridges. See [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the height of the microplate must not exceed 25 mm.

The SoftMax Pro Software can collect data from one or more microplates and store it in a single data file, using the same or different instrument settings for different microplates. Assays requiring a read in two or more read modes or read types can be combined in a single experiment and run with a single command in the software, by defining separate microplate reads and enabling **Auto Read**. For information on the acquisition and analysis capabilities of the software, see the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Applications

The high sensitivity and flexibility of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument make it useful for applications in the fields of biochemistry, cell biology, immunology, molecular biology, and microbiology.

Typical applications include ELISA, nucleic acid, protein, enzymatic type homogeneous and heterogeneous assays, microbial growth, endotoxin testing, and pipettor calibration.

Application notes with specific application protocol suggestions can be found in the Information Center and the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices web site at www.moleculardevices.com.

Optics

The 2x2 monochromators permit individual optimization of wavelengths for both excitation and emission in fluorescence readings. Mirrored optics shape the light, and a height-adjustable objective lens focuses the beam into the sample volume. Outside of the LED range, PMT Gain can be set to automatic or user-selected at high, medium, low, or manual.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the microplate height and read height must be set accurately before starting a read. If the microplate is lidded, you must select **Is Lidded** in the **Settings** dialog and make sure that the microplate height with a lid is set accurately in the **Plate Editor** before starting a read. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Dynamic Range

The dynamic range of detection is approximately from 10^{-6} to 10^{-12} molar fluorescein. Variations in measured fluorescence values are virtually eliminated by internal compensation for detector sensitivity, photomultiplier tube voltage and sensitivity, and excitation intensity. The photometric range is 0.000 to 4.000 ODs with a resolution of 0.001 OD.



CAUTION! Never touch the optic mirrors, lenses, filters, or cables. The optics are extremely delicate, and critical to the function of the instrument.



CAUTION! Use of organic solvents (such as dichloromethane) can cause harm to the optics in the instrument. Extreme caution is recommended when using organic solvents. Always use a plate lid and do not place a plate containing these materials in the microplate chamber for prolonged periods of time. Damage caused by the use of incompatible or aggressive solvents is NOT covered by the instrument warranty.

Microplate Controls

Microplate controls include Automix and On-the-Fly Detection.

Automix

The Automix feature of the permits the contents of the wells in a microplate to be mixed automatically inside the microplate chamber before each read cycle, making it possible to do kinetic analysis of solid-phase, enzyme-mediated reactions.

Automix must be selected before you start a read. The process related to the Automix setting depend on the selected read mode:

- In endpoint reads, Automix shakes the plate for a definable number of seconds and then reads at all selected wavelengths.
- In kinetic reads, Automix can shake the plate for a definable number of seconds before the initial reading, and for a definable number of seconds before each subsequent reading.

The following Automix settings are available for the SpectraMax i3 Instrument:

- **Intensity:** Low, Medium, or High. Actual shake speed is based on the microplate format.
- **Direction:** Linear or Orbital patterns.
- **Duration:** Length of time in seconds (1 to 999).

Molecular Devices strongly recommends the use of Automix for ELISAs and other solid-phase, enzyme-mediated reactions to enhance accuracy.

On-the-Fly Detection

With some detection cartridges, the instrument can read microplates as the microplate drawer is moving within the chamber instead of pausing the microplate drawer to read each well. This results in shorter read times.

There are two On-the-Fly Detection modes:

- Selecting **Performance** results in a faster read time than not using On-the-Fly Detection, but not as fast as the Speed mode. Performance provides considerably better results than Speed for demanding assays.
- Selecting **Speed** results in the fastest possible read time per microplate. However, there is a trade-off between the data quality and read speed because each well is sampled for shorter integration times.

The following table shows the minimum read time between kinetic cycles for different plate types in each of the on-the-fly detection modes. These read times do not include the time needed for the microplate drawer to move the plate into the instrument and start the read, and then move the plate out of the instrument, which can add approximately 25 seconds to the overall read time.

Table 1-1: Plate Read Times for On-the-Fly Detection (\pm 5 seconds)

Mode	96-well	384-well	1536-well
Optimized for speed	12 seconds	25 seconds	50 seconds
Optimized for performance	20 seconds	40 seconds	80 seconds



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the microplate height and read height must be set accurately before starting a read. If the microplate is lidded, you must select **Is Lidded** in the **Settings** dialog and make sure that the microplate height with a lid is set accurately in the **Plate Editor** before starting a read. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Environmental Controls

The temperature inside the microplate chamber can be controlled using the software. Temperature can be maintained at ambient plus $5^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ up to 45°C .

The gas inlet permits the partial pressure of CO_2 , nitrogen, or other gas inside the microplate chamber to be applied. This is useful when reading a cell-based assay in which the CO_2 environment needs to be controlled to keep cell cultures alive. The gas supply is not controlled or monitored by the instrument or software. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply](#) on page 74.



Note: The combination of temperature and CO_2 environment controls does not create a true CO_2 incubator environment in the instrument.

Use a compressed gas supply in a well-ventilated area. The instrument is not air-tight, and so gas can escape into the atmosphere surrounding the instrument. When using potentially toxic gas, always observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer to maintain a safe working environment.

Chapter 2: Read Modes and Read Types

The SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform can measure samples in absorbance (ABS), fluorescence intensity (FL), and luminescence (LUM) read modes.

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The SpectraMax® MiniMax™ Imaging Cytometer adds imaging capability to the SpectraMax i3 Instrument to visually inspect your sample and to run cell-based assays at cellular or whole-cell resolution. See [SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer on page 91](#).

Use the SoftMax Pro Software to define the parameters for the read mode and read type of your assay. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Application notes with specific application protocol suggestions can be found in the Information Center and the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices web site at www.moleculardevices.com.

For more information on the supported read modes, see the following topics:

- [Absorbance Read Mode on page 25](#)
- [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#)
- [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#)
- [Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode on page 39](#)
- [HTRF Read Mode on page 44](#)
- [Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode on page 48](#)
- [AlphaScreen Read Mode on page 53](#)
- [Western Blot TRF Read Mode on page 56](#)
- [Imaging Read Mode on page 59](#)

Supported Read Types

For most read modes, endpoint, kinetic, multi-point well-scan, and spectrum microplate applications can be set up and run with the SoftMax Pro Software.

For more information on the supported read types, see the following topics:

- [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Spectrum Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Membrane Read Type on page 24](#)

Endpoint Read Type

In an Endpoint read, a reading of each microplate well is taken in the center of each well, at a single wavelength or at multiple wavelengths. Depending on the read mode, raw data values are reported as optical density (OD), %Transmittance (%T), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU).

Kinetic Read Type

In a Kinetic read, the instrument collects data over time with multiple readings taken at regular intervals.

The values calculated based on raw kinetic data include VMax, VMax per Sec, Time to VMax, and Onset Time. Kinetic readings can be single-wavelength or multiple-wavelength readings. Kinetic analysis can be done for up to 99 hours. The kinetic read interval depends on the instrument setup parameters selected in the SoftMax Pro Software.

Kinetic analysis has many advantages when determining the relative activity of an enzyme in different types of microplate assays, including ELISAs and the purification and characterization of enzymes and enzyme conjugates. Kinetic analysis is capable of providing improved dynamic range, precision, and sensitivity relative to endpoint analysis.

Peak Pro™ Analysis functions provide advanced peak detection and characterization for applicable kinetic reads. See the *SoftMax Pro Software Formula Reference Guide*.

Well Scan Read Type

A Well Scan read can take readings at more than one location within a well. A Well Scan read takes one or more readings of a single well of a microplate on an evenly spaced grid inside of each well at single or multiple wavelengths.

Some applications involve the detection of whole cells in large-area tissue culture plates. Well Scan reads can be used with such microplates to permit maximum surface area detection in whole-cell protocols. Since many cell lines tend to grow as clumps or in the corners of microplate wells, you can choose from several patterns and define the number of points to be scanned to work best with your particular application.

The following scanning patterns are available:

- A horizontal line (**Row** or **Well** read order)
- A vertical line (**Column** read order)
- A cross pattern
- A fill pattern

The fill pattern can be either round or square to match the shape of the well. The image in the Well Scan settings shows the shape of the well as defined for the selected microplate.

You can set the density of the well scan to determine the number of points to read in a line pattern or the maximum number of horizontal and vertical points included in a cross or fill pattern.

Depending on the read mode selected, the values are reported as optical density (OD), %Transmittance (%T), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU).

Spectrum Read Type

Depending on the read mode selected, a Spectrum read measures optical density (OD), %Transmittance (%T), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU) across a spectrum of wavelengths.

Spectrum readings are made using the scanning monochromators of the instrument and can measure across the spectrum of absorbance wavelengths 230 nm to 1000 nm. Fluorescent intensity reads scan excitation wavelengths between 250 nm to 830 nm and emission wavelengths between 270 nm to 850 nm, where the emission wavelength must be a minimum of 20 nm greater than the excitation wavelength. Luminescence reads scan emission wavelengths between 300 nm to 850 nm.

Membrane Read Type

The Membrane read type is used for a time-resolved fluorescence reading of a Western Blot membrane. The selected area is read, and a TIFF image is generated with the results of the read.

The Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Western Blot Assay Kit is a novel system for protein analysis that is incorporated into a SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform. Membranes are incubated with Eu-chelate labeled secondary antibodies or streptavidin that bind specifically to the target protein-specific primary antibody. For more information, contact your Molecular Devices representative or search the knowledge base for **ScanLater** or **Western Blot** at www.moleculardevices.com/support.html.

For information about the detection cartridge for Western Blot membrane reads, see [ScanLater Western Blot \(WB\) Detection Cartridge](#) on page 160.

Absorbance Read Mode

In the Absorbance (ABS) read mode, the instrument measures the Optical Density (OD) of the sample solutions.

Absorbance is the quantity of light absorbed by a solution. To measure absorbance accurately, it is necessary to eliminate light scatter. If there is no turbidity, then absorbance = optical density.

$$A = \log_{10}(I_0 / I) = -\log_{10}(I / I_0)$$

where I_0 is incident light before it enters the sample, I is the intensity of light after it passes through the sample, and A is the measured absorbance.

For Absorbance reads, you can choose whether to display absorbance data as Optical Density (OD) or %Transmittance (%T) in the Reduction dialog.

Optical Density

Optical density (OD) is the quantity of light passing through a sample to a detector relative to the total quantity of light available. Optical Density includes absorbance of the sample plus light scatter from turbidity and background. You can compensate for background using blanks.

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the chromophore and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

Some applications are designed for turbid samples, such as algae or other micro-organisms in suspension. The reported OD values for turbid samples are likely to be different when read by different instruments.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

% Transmittance

%Transmittance is the ratio of transmitted light to the incident light for absorbance reads.

$$T = I / I_0$$

$$\%T = 100T$$

where I is the intensity of light after it passes through the sample and I_0 is incident light before it enters the sample.

Optical Density and %Transmittance are related by the following formulas:

$$\%T = 10^{2-OD}$$

$$OD = 2 - \log_{10}(\%T)$$

The factor of two comes from the fact that %T is expressed as a percent of the transmitted light and $\log_{10}(100) = 2$.

When in %Transmittance analysis mode, the SoftMax Pro Software converts the raw OD values reported by the instrument to %Transmittance using the above formula. All subsequent calculations are done on the converted numbers.

Applications of Absorbance

Absorbance-based detection has been commonly used to evaluate changes in color or turbidity, permitting widespread use including ELISAs, protein quantitation, endotoxin assays, and cytotoxicity assays. With absorbance readers that are capable of measuring in the ultraviolet (UV) range, the concentration of nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) can be found using their molar extinction coefficients.

For micro-volume measurements, you can use SpectraDrop 24-well micro-volume microplates and SpectraDrop 64-well micro-volume microplates.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

PathCheck Pathlength Measurement Technology

The temperature-independent PathCheck® Pathlength Measurement Technology normalizes your absorbance values to a 1 cm path length based on the near-infrared absorbance of water.

The Beer–Lambert law states that absorbance is proportional to the distance that light travels through the sample:

$$A = \epsilon bc$$

where A is the absorbance, ϵ is the molar absorptivity of the sample, b is the pathlength, and c is the concentration of the sample. The longer the pathlength, the higher the absorbance.

Microplate readers use a vertical light path so the distance of the light through the sample depends on the volume. This variable pathlength makes it difficult to do extinction-based assays and also makes it confusing to compare results between microplate readers and spectrophotometers.

The standard pathlength of a 1 cm cuvette is the conventional basis for quantifying the unique absorptivity properties of compounds in solution. Quantitative analysis can be done on the basis of extinction coefficients, without standard curves (for example, NADH-based enzyme assays). When using a cuvette, the pathlength is known and is independent of sample volume, so absorbance is directly proportional to concentration when there is no background interference.

In a microplate, pathlength is dependent on the liquid volume, so absorbance is proportional to both the concentration and the pathlength of the sample. Standard curves are often used to determine analyte concentrations in vertical-beam photometry of unknowns, yet errors can still occur from pipetting the samples and standards. The PathCheck technology automatically determines the pathlength of aqueous samples in the microplate and normalizes the absorbance in each well to a pathlength of 1 cm. This way of correcting the microwell absorbance values is accurate to within 2.5% of the values obtained directly in a 1 cm cuvette.

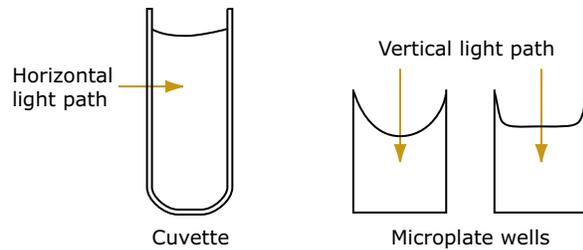


Figure 2-1: Cuvette and Microplate Well Light Paths

The 1 cm values can be obtained by using the factory installed *Water Constant*. PathCheck technology is used to normalize the data acquired from absorbance endpoint microplate readings to a 1 cm pathlength, correcting the OD for each well to the value expected if the sample were read in a 1 cm cuvette.

Water Constant

The Water Constant correction method is supported for absorbance endpoint reads.

The PathCheck technology is based on the absorbance of water in the near infrared spectral region (between 900 nm to 1000 nm). If the sample is completely aqueous, has no turbidity and has a low salt concentration (less than 0.5 M), the Water Constant is sufficient. The Water Constant is determined for each instrument during manufacture and is stored in the instrument.



Note: After you have read a plate with PathCheck technology turned on, PathCheck information is stored permanently in the data file. You have the option of applying, or not applying, PathCheck technology to the absorbance values. If you do not have PathCheck technology turned on during the plate read, you cannot apply the PathCheck Pathlength Measurement Technology feature after the read.

Eliminating the Pathlength-Independent Component

Raw OD measurements of microplate samples include both pathlength-dependent components (sample and solvent) and a pathlength-independent component (OD of microplate material). The pathlength-independent component must be eliminated from the calculation to get valid results that have been normalized by the PathCheck technology. You can do this using a plate blank or using a plate background constant.

Using a Plate Blank

This method can be used if all samples in the microplate are the same volume and you are not depending on the PathCheck technology to correct for variability in volumes.

To use this method:

1. Designate a minimum of one well (preferably several) as Plate Blank.
2. Pipette buffer (for example, your sample matrix) into those wells and read along with your samples. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

The SoftMax Pro Software automatically subtracts the average of the blank wells from each of the samples. The OD of the microplate material is subtracted as part of the blank.

3. Make sure that **Use Plate Blank** is checked under **Other Options** in the **Data Reduction** dialog.

Using a Plate Background Constant

If your sample volumes are not identical or if you choose not to use a Plate Blank, then you must use a Plate Background Constant. Omitting a Plate Background Constant results in artificially high values after being normalized by the PathCheck technology.

To determine the Plate Background Constant:

1. Fill a clean microplate with water.
2. Read at the wavelengths that you will be reading your samples.

The average OD value is the Plate Background Constant. If you intend to read your samples at more than one wavelength, there should be a corresponding number of Plate Background Constant values for each wavelength.



Note: It is important that you put water in the wells and not read a dry microplate for the Plate Background Constant. A dry microplate has a slightly higher OD value than a water-filled microplate because of differences in refractive indices. Using a dry microplate results in PathCheck technology normalized values that are lower than 1 cm cuvette values.

Interfering Substances

Material that absorbs in the 900 nm to 1000 nm spectral region could interfere with PathCheck technology measurements. Fortunately, there are few materials that do interfere at the concentrations generally used.

Turbidity is the most common interference. If you can detect turbidity in your sample, you should not use the PathCheck technology. Turbidity elevates the 900 nm measurement more than the 1000 nm measurement and causes an erroneously low estimate of pathlength. Using Cuvette Reference does not reliably correct for turbidity.

Samples that are highly colored in the upper-visible spectrum might have absorbance extending into the near-infrared (NIR) spectrum and can interfere with the PathCheck technology. Examples include Lowry assays, molybdate-based assays, and samples containing hemoglobins or porphyrins. In general, if the sample is distinctly red or purple, you should check for interference before using the PathCheck technology.

To determine possible color interference, do the following:

- Measure the OD at 900 nm and 1000 nm (both measured with air reference).
- Subtract the 900 nm value from the 1000 nm value.

Do the same for pure water.

If the delta OD for the sample differs significantly from the delta OD for water, then it is recommended to not use the PathCheck technology.

Organic solvents could interfere with the PathCheck technology if they have absorbance in the region of the NIR water peak. Solvents such as ethanol and methanol do not absorb in the NIR region, so they do not interfere, except for causing a decrease in the water absorbance to the extent of their presence in the solution. If, however, the solvent absorbs between 900 nm and 1000 nm, the interference would be similar to the interference of highly colored samples as previously described. If you are considering adding an organic solvent other than ethanol or methanol, you should run a Spectrum scan between 900 nm and 1000 nm to determine if the solvent would interfere with the PathCheck technology.

Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode

Fluorescence occurs when absorbed light is re-radiated at a longer wavelength. In the Fluorescence Intensity (FL) read mode, the instrument measures the intensity of the re-radiated light and expresses the result in Relative Fluorescence Units (RFU).

The governing equation for fluorescence is:

$$\text{Fluorescence} = \text{extinction coefficient} \times \text{concentration} \times \text{quantum yield} \times \text{excitation intensity} \times \text{pathlength} \times \text{emission collection efficiency}$$

Fluorescent materials absorb light energy of a characteristic wavelength (excitation), undergo an electronic state change, and instantaneously emit light of a longer wavelength (emission). Most common fluorescent materials have well-characterized excitation and emission spectra. The following figure shows an example of excitation and emission spectra for a fluorophore. The excitation and emission bands are each fairly broad, with half-bandwidths of approximately 40 nm, and the difference between the wavelengths of the excitation and emission maxima (the Stokes shift) is generally fairly small, about 30 nm. There is considerable overlap between the excitation and emission spectra (gray area) when a small Stokes shift is present.

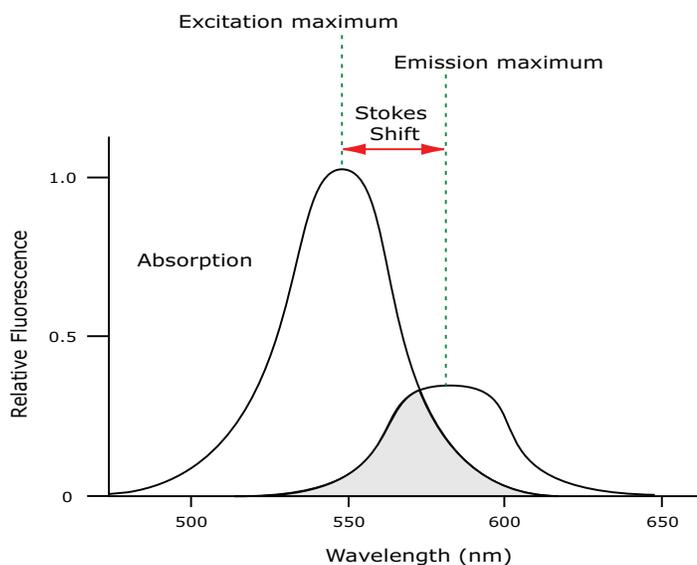


Figure 2-2: Excitation and Emission Spectra

Because the intensity of the excitation light is usually many tens of thousands of times greater than that of the emitted light, you must have sufficient spectral separation to reduce the interference of the excitation light with detection of the emitted light.

-
- * **Tip:** If the Stokes shift is small, you should choose an excitation wavelength that is as far away from the emission maximum as possible while still being capable of stimulating the fluorophore so that less of the excited light overlaps the emission spectrum, permitting better selection and quantitation of the emitted light.
-

The **Spectral Optimization Wizard** in the SoftMax Pro Software provides the best settings for maximizing the signal to background window, $(S-B)/B$, while minimizing the optimization time.

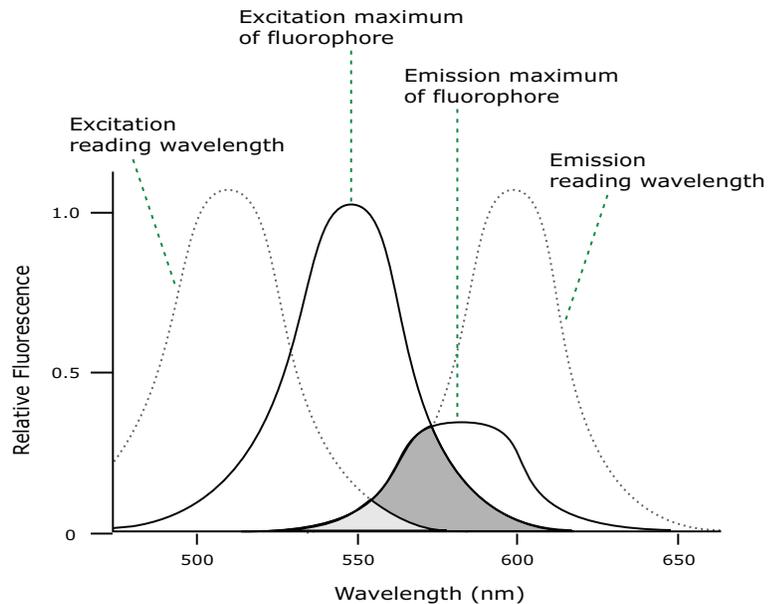


Figure 2-3: Optimized Excitation and Emission Reading Wavelengths

The previous figure shows that the best results are often obtained when the excitation and emission wavelengths used for reading are not the same as the peak wavelengths of the excitation and emission spectra of the fluorophore. When the reading wavelengths for excitation and emission are separated, a smaller quantity of excitation light passes through to the emission monochromator (gray area) and on to the PMT, resulting in a purer emission signal and more accurate data.

The instrument permits scanning of both excitation and emission wavelengths, using separate tunable dual monochromators. One benefit of scanning emission spectra is that you can determine more accurately whether the emission is, in fact, the expected fluorophore, or multiple fluorophores, and not one generated by a variety of background sources or by contaminants. One more benefit is that you can find excitation and emission wavelengths that prevent interference when interfering fluorescent species are present.

For this reason, it is desirable to scan emission for both an intermediate concentration of labeled sample, as well as the background of unlabeled sample. The optimum setting is where the ratio of the sample emission to background emission is at the maximum.

Fluorescence intensity data is dependent on a number of variables. See [Analyzing Fluorescence Intensity Data on page 32](#).

Applications of Fluorescence Intensity

Fluorescence intensity is used widely in applications such as fluorescent ELISAs, protein assays, nucleic acid quantitation, reporter gene assays, cell viability, cell proliferation, and cytotoxicity. One more major application of this mode is to study the kinetics of ion release.

Some assays use a fluorescent label to selectively attach to certain compounds. The quantity or concentration of the compound can then be quantified by measuring the fluorescence intensity of the label, which is attached to the compound. Such methods are often used to quantify low concentrations of DNA or RNA, for example.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The following detection cartridges have fluorescence intensity read mode capability:

- [Fluorescence Intensity \(FI\) Detection Cartridges, see page 139](#)
- [Fluorescence Intensity \(FI\) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge, see page 142](#)



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

Analyzing Fluorescence Intensity Data

Fluorescence intensity data is dependent on a number of variables. Raw data is compared to a standard curve with known concentrations of a reference label.

A standard curve consists of, at a minimum, a blank sample and a reference standard sample of known concentration. The raw data can then be expressed in equivalent concentration of a reference label.

Analyzing and validating fluorescence intensity data generally consists of the following:

- [Background Correction and Quantification on page 33](#)
- [Detection Limit on page 33](#)
- [Linearity and the Linear Dynamic Range on page 34](#)

Background Correction and Quantification

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the label and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

The blank sample reveals the offset underlying each data sample. This offset does not carry information on the label, and is generally subtracted before data reduction is done.

The blank-subtracted raw data are proportional to the quantity of label in a sample such that the label concentration is quantified by the following equation.

$$\text{conc}_{\text{label}} = \frac{(\text{sample} - \text{blank})}{\frac{\text{std} - \text{blank}}{\text{conc}_{\text{std}}}}$$

where conc_{std} is the concentration of the *standard*, and *sample*, *blank*, and *standard* are average values of replicates for the sample, blank, and standard wells. In the general case where the standard curve covers a concentration range of more than a few linear logs, $(\text{standard} - \text{blank}) / \text{conc}_{\text{std}}$ is equivalent to the slope of the standard curve, and so the concentration of the label is determined by $(\text{sample} - \text{blank}) / (\text{slope of standard curve})$.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

Detection Limit

The detection limit is the smallest sample concentration that can be measured reliably above the blank. Determining the detection limit requires taking a number of blank measurements and calculating an average value and standard deviation for the blanks. The detection threshold is defined as the average blank plus three standard deviations. If the average sample value measures above the threshold, the sample can be detected at a statistically significant level.

The detection limit can be described by the following equation:

$$\text{Det Limit} = \frac{3 \text{ Stdev}_{\text{blank}}}{\frac{\text{std} - \text{blank}}{\text{conc}_{\text{std}}}}$$

where conc_{std} is the concentration of the standard, $\text{StDev}_{\text{Blank}}$ is the standard deviation of the blank replicates, and *blank* and *Std* are average values of the replicates for the blank and standard wells.

Determining the detection limit for an assay requires multiple blanks to calculate their standard deviation.

Linearity and the Linear Dynamic Range

Within a wide range at moderately high concentrations, blanked raw data is proportional to the quantity of label in a sample.

The linear dynamic range (LDR) is defined by:

$$\text{LDR} = \log_{10} \left(\frac{\text{max conc lin}}{\text{detection limit}} \right)$$

where *LDR* is expressed as a log, and *max conc lin* is the highest concentration in the linear range that can be quantified.

When the standard curve after blank reduction is not linear in concentration at the lower end, there might be an incorrect or contaminated blank.

Luminescence Read Mode

In luminescence read mode, no excitation is necessary as the species being measured emit light naturally. For this reason, the lamp does not flash, so no background excitation interference occurs.

In the Luminescence (LUM) read mode, the instrument provides measurements in Relative Luminescence Units (RLUs).

Luminescence is the emission of light by processes that derive energy from essentially non-thermal changes, the motion of subatomic particles, or the excitation of an atomic system by radiation. Luminescence detection relies on the production of light from a chemical reaction in a sample.

To help eliminate background luminescence from a microplate that has been exposed to light, Molecular Devices recommends dark adaptation of the microplate by placing the sample-loaded microplate in the instrument for several minutes before starting the read.

For monochromator-based instruments, the default setting for luminescence is the “zero order” position where the grating monochromator acts as a mirror that reflects all light to the PMT detector. If wavelength selection is desired, you can choose the wavelength where peak emission is expected to occur. Also, multiple wavelength choices let species with multiple components be differentiated and measured easily.

Luminescence can be read from the top of a microplate. Solid white microplates are recommended for luminescence reads.

Concentrations or qualitative results are derived from raw data with a standard curve or by comparison with reference controls. See [Analyzing Luminescence Data on page 36](#).

Applications of Luminescence

Chemiluminescent or bioluminescent reactions can be induced to measure the quantity of a particular compound in a sample. Examples of luminescent assays include the following:

- Reporter gene assays (the measurement of luciferase gene expression)
- Quantitation of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) as an indication of cell counts with cell-proliferation, cytotoxicity, and biomass assays
- Enzyme measurements with luminescent substrates, such as immunoassays

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A luminescence (LUM) detection cartridge contains its own independent optics and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The following detection cartridges have luminescence read mode capability:

- [Glow Luminescence \(LUM\) Detection Cartridges, see page 147](#)
- [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(BRET2\) Detection Cartridge, see page 150](#)
- [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(Chroma-Glo\) Detection Cartridge, see page 155](#)



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

Analyzing Luminescence Data

The conversion rate of photons to counts is individual for each reader. Therefore, raw data from the same plate can seem significantly different from one instrument to the next. Also, the data format used by other manufacturers might not be counts per second and can be different by several orders of magnitude. It is important to know that the number of counts and the size of figures is in no way an indication of sensitivity. See [Detection Limit on page 37](#).

Concentrations or qualitative results are derived from raw data with a standard curve or by comparison with reference controls. A standard curve consists of, at a minimum, a blank sample and a reference standard sample of known concentration. The raw data can then be expressed in equivalent concentration of a reference label. The raw data is normalized to counts per second by dividing the number of counts by the read time per well.

Analyzing and validating luminescence data generally consists of the following:

- [Background Correction on page 36](#)
- [Detection Limit on page 37](#)
- [Sample Volumes and Concentration of Reactants on page 37](#)
- [Data Optimization on page 38](#)

Background Correction

The light detected in a luminescent measurement generally has two components: specific light from the luminescent reaction and an approximately constant level of background light caused by various factors, including the plate material and impurities in the reagents. The background can be effectively measured using blank replicates. Blanks should include the luminescent substrate (chemical energy source) but not the luminescence agent (generally an enzymatic group which makes the substrate glow).

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the label and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

The blank sample reveals the offset underlying each data sample. This offset does not carry information on the label, and is generally subtracted before data reduction is done.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

To help eliminate background luminescence from a microplate that has been exposed to light, Molecular Devices recommends dark adaptation of the microplate by placing the sample-loaded microplate in the instrument for several minutes before starting the read.

Detection Limit

The detection limit is the smallest sample concentration that can be measured reliably above the blank. Determining the detection limit requires taking a number of blank measurements and calculating an average value and standard deviation for the blanks. The detection threshold is defined as the average blank plus three standard deviations. If the average sample value measures above the threshold, the sample can be detected at a statistically significant level.

The detection limit can be described by the following equation:

$$\text{Det Limit} = \frac{3 \text{ Stdev}_{\text{blank}}}{\frac{\text{std} - \text{blank}}{\text{conc}_{\text{std}}}}$$

where conc_{std} is the concentration of the standard, $\text{StDev}_{\text{Blank}}$ is the standard deviation of the blank replicates, and blank and Std are average values of the replicates for the blank and standard wells.

Determining the detection limit for an assay requires multiple blanks to calculate their standard deviation.

Sample Volumes and Concentration of Reactants

The concentration of the luminescent agent impacts the quantity of light output in a luminescent reaction. Light is emitted as a result of a reaction between two or more compounds. Therefore, the quantity of light output is proportional to the quantity of the limiting reagent in the sample.

For example, in an ATP/luciferin-luciferase system, when total volume is held constant and ATP is the limiting reagent, the blanked light output is proportional to the concentration of ATP in the sample, at very high concentrations of ATP. Substrate can be used up and become rate-limiting, providing it is the rate-limiting component. In this case, the non-linearity is an effect of the assay and not caused by the microplate reader.

Data Optimization

The measurement noise is dependent on the read time per sample (time per plate or time per well). In particular, the detection limit improves when the read time is increased. Therefore, it is important to specify the read time when comparing measurements.

All low-light-level detection devices have some measurement noise in common. To average out the measurement noise, optimization of the time per well involves accumulating as many counts as possible. Within some range, you can reduce noise (CVs, detection limit) by increasing the read time per well, as far as is acceptable from throughput and sample stability considerations.

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{| \text{Mean}_{c+} - \text{Mean}_{c-} |}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.

Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must install an applicable detection cartridge in the instrument.

Time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) is a measurement technique that depends on three characteristics that lead to better discrimination between the specific signal, proportional to the quantity of label, and the unspecific fluorescence resulting from background and compound interference:

- Pulsed excitation light sources
- Time-gated electronics faster than the fluorescence lifetime
- Labels with prolonged fluorescence lifetime

The time-gating electronics introduce a delay between the cut off of each light pulse and the start of signal collection. During the delay, the unspecific fluorescence (caused by test compounds, assay reagents, and the microplate) vanishes while only a small portion of the specific fluorescence from the label is sacrificed. Enough of the specific signal remains during the decay period with the added benefit of reduced background.

In Time-Resolved Fluorescence read mode, the instrument detects the extremely long emission half-lives of rare earth elements called lanthanides such as europium (lifetime of about 700 μs), samarium (lifetime of about 70 μs), or terbium (lifetime of about 1000 μs).

Applications of Time-Resolved Fluorescence

Time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) is widely used in high throughput screening applications such as kinase assays, and is useful in some fluorescence immunoassays, such as DELFIA (dissociation-enhanced enzyme linked fluorescence immunoassay). TRF is also useful in some assay variants of TR-FRET (time-resolved fluorescence resonance energy transfer) in which the FRET acceptor label acts as a quencher only and does not emit fluorescence. The proximity between donor label and acceptor (quencher) is then quantified by the intensity decrease of the donor label.

DELFIA requires washing steps as in an ELISA, but the TR-FRET assay involving quenching is a homogeneous microplate assay technique and requires only mixing and measuring—no wash steps are required. It can also be miniaturized, which makes it useful for high-throughput screening applications.

The Cisbio Bioassays HTRF (Homogeneous Time-Resolved Fluorescence) technology is a proprietary time-resolved fluorescence technology that overcomes many of the drawbacks of standard Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET) techniques, such as the requirements to correct for autofluorescence and the fluorescent contributions of unbound fluorophores. See [HTRF Read Mode on page 44](#).

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The following detection cartridges have time-resolved fluorescence read mode capability:

- [Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge on page 133](#)
- [Time Resolved Fluorescence \(TRF\) Detection Cartridge, see page 136](#)



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

Analyzing Time-Resolved Fluorescence Data

A time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) measurement includes a number of pulses. Each pulse consists of turning the light source on and off (Excitation Time), pausing for a specified length of time (Measurement Delay), and measuring the fluorescence intensity of the sample for a specified length of time (Integration Time). These pulses are repeated several times, as specified in the protocol parameters.

Analyzing and interpreting TRF data generally consists of the following:

- [Blank Correction on page 40](#)
- [Data Normalization on page 41](#)
- [Data Optimization on page 41](#)

Blank Correction

Although background is significantly lower than with fluorescence intensity measurements, Molecular Devices recommends that you use blanks or assay controls.

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the label and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

The blank sample reveals the offset underlying each data sample. This offset does not carry information on the label, and is generally subtracted before data reduction is done.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

Data Normalization

TRF raw data changes in magnitude when the timing parameters are changed. However, TRF data are normalized for a number of 1000 pulses. This means that the sample raw data does not change when only the number of pulses is changed.

When selecting a fast read mode, the raw data becomes slightly lower because during the continuous plate movement, some signal is collected under non-optimum focusing conditions.

Data Optimization

There are two timing parameters which can be optimized to adjust the performance of the measurement as desired: time per well and integration time per cycle.

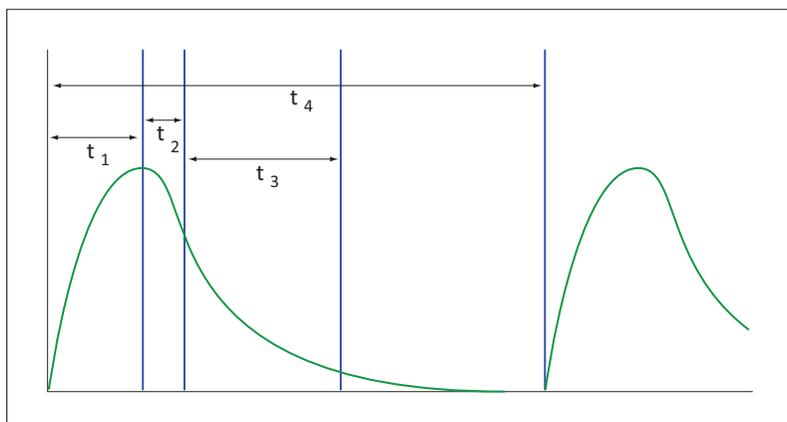
The measurement noise is dependent on the read time per sample (time per plate or time per well). In particular, the detection limit improves when the read time is increased. Therefore, it is important to specify the read time when comparing measurements. For TRF, the read time per well increases with the selected number of pulses. The time between pulses and the intensity of each pulse, however, can be different on various systems.

All low-light-level detection devices have some measurement noise in common. To average out the measurement noise, optimization of the time per well involves accumulating as many counts as possible. Within some range, you can reduce noise (CVs, detection limit) by increasing the read time per well, as far as is acceptable from throughput and sample stability considerations.

To further optimize measurement results, optimize the timing parameters. The following table and figure can be used as guidelines for the selection of timing parameters.

Table 2-1: Time-resolved fluorescence timing parameters

Parameter	Value	Comment
Pulse length	0.100 ms	The period for excitation of the sample, shown as t_1 in the following figure. This is the suggested value for the TRF detection cartridge.
Measurement delay	0.010 ms	The delay to ensure the excitation pulse is no longer detectable, shown as t_2 in the following figure. This is the suggested value for the TRF detection cartridge.
Integration time per cycle (pulse)	1.890 ms	The period for accumulating the signal, shown as t_3 in the following figure. This is the suggested value for the TRF detection cartridge.

**Figure 2-4: Timing parameters for time-resolved fluorescence**

When neglecting the time delay t_2 compared to the integration time window t_3 , the accumulated signal A can be approximated with the following equation:

$$A / A_{\max} = (1 - \exp(-M)) \times 100\%$$

In the previous equation, M is the size of the time window (or integration time) divided by the exponential decay time constant (or the fluorescence lifetime of the label).

$$M = (\text{integration time}) / (\text{fluorescence lifetime})$$

For example, using Europium, which has a fluorescence lifetime of 700 μs , and the suggested integration time per cycle of 1.890 ms (or 1890 μs), $M = 1890 / 700 = 2.7$. Inserting this value of M into the first equation yields $A / A_{\max} = 93\%$.

To optimize the integration time per cycle (pulse), the integration time should be set such that the value of M produces the desired signal. For example, to get more than 86% signal, select an integration time such that M is greater than 2.0. Using the previous Europium example and solving for the integration time, the integration time can be set to M (2.0) times the fluorescence lifetime (700 μs), or 1400 μs (1.4 ms).

Table 2-2: Achievable accumulated signal percentage compared to M

M	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	2.00	3.00
A / A _{max} [%]	22	39	53	63	71	78	86	95

M can be technically limited by the time between pulses. Further gain in signal above some value of M can be negligible to improve results.

HTRF Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must install an applicable detection cartridge in the instrument.

Homogeneous time-resolved fluorescence (HTRF) is a measurement technique based on fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) using the advantages of time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) reading.

Fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) is a distance-dependent interaction between the electronic excited states of two dye molecules in which excitation is transferred from a donor molecule to an acceptor molecule *without emission of a photon*.

FRET relies on the distance-dependent transfer of energy from a donor molecule to an acceptor molecule. Due to its sensitivity to distance, FRET has been used to investigate molecular interactions. FRET is the radiationless transmission of energy from a donor molecule to an acceptor molecule. The donor molecule is the dye or chromophore that initially absorbs the energy and the acceptor is the chromophore to which the energy is subsequently transferred. This resonance interaction occurs over greater than interatomic distances, without conversion to thermal energy, and without a molecular collision. The transfer of energy leads to a reduction in the fluorescence intensity and excited state lifetime of the donor, and an increase in the emission intensity of the acceptor. A pair of molecules that interact in such a manner that FRET occurs is often referred to as a donor/acceptor pair. While there are many factors that influence FRET, the primary conditions that need to be met for FRET to occur are relatively few:

- The donor and acceptor molecules must be in close proximity to each other.
- The absorption or excitation spectrum of the acceptor must overlap the fluorescence emission spectrum of the donor.

The degree to which they overlap is referred to as the spectral overlap integral (J).

- The donor and acceptor transition must be approximately parallel.

HTRF uses a donor fluorophore with a long fluorescence lifetime, such as Europium. The acceptor fluorophore acts as if it also has a long fluorescence lifetime. This lets the time-gating principle of time-resolved fluorescence be applied to the acceptor emission to separate specific signal from background and signal caused by compound interference.

Time-gating electronics introduce a delay between the flashes and the start of signal collection. During the delay, the unspecific fluorescence caused by test compounds, assay reagents, and the microplate vanishes while only a small portion of the specific fluorescence from the acceptor fluorophore is sacrificed. Enough of the specific signal remains, with the benefit of reduced background.

Applications of Homogeneous Time-Resolved Fluorescence

Homogeneous time-resolved fluorescence (HTRF) is used in competitive assays to quantify the binding between two labeled molecules, or the disintegration of a bound complex. Binding partners can have similar molecular weights as opposed to fluorescence polarization read modes. HTRF is a homogeneous assay that requires only mixing and measuring—no wash steps are required. It can also be miniaturized, which makes it useful for high-throughput screening applications.

The fluorescence ratio related to the HTRF readout is a correction method developed by Cisbio and covered by the US patent 5,527,684 and its foreign equivalents, for which Cisbio has granted a license to Molecular Devices. Its application is strictly limited to the use of HTRF reagents and technology, excluding other TR-FRET technologies such as IMAP TR-FRET calculations of acceptor to donor ratios.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

To do HTRF reads, the instrument requires the [Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge](#), see page 133.



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

HTRF is a registered trademark of Cisbio Bioassays.

Analyzing HTRF Data

A Homogeneous Time-Resolved Fluorescence (HTRF) measurement includes a number of flash intervals. Each flash interval consists of flashing the lamp, pausing for a specified length of time, and measuring the fluorescence intensity of the sample. These flash intervals are repeated several times, as specified in the protocol parameters. See [Data Optimization on page 46](#).

Analyzing and interpreting HTRF data generally consists of the following:

- [Data Reduction on page 46](#)
- [Data Optimization on page 46](#)

Data Reduction

Data reduction for HTRF reads consists of two steps.

First, a ratio of the signal measured by the emission from the acceptor label at 665 nm to the signal measured by the emission of the donor label at 616 nm is calculated and multiplied by a factor of 10,000. This generates what is called the HTRF ratio.

In the second step, ratios are calculated that represent the relative change in the HTRF signal compared to that of the assay background, represented by assay controls potentially named negative or Standard 0. This relative response ratio is called the Delta F and is formatted as a percentage, although values greater than 100 can be generated.

Data Optimization

The measurement noise is dependent on the read time per sample (time per plate or time per well). In particular, the detection limit improves when the read time is increased. Therefore, it is important to specify the read time when comparing measurements. For TRF, the read time per well increases with the selected number of pulses. The time between pulses, however, can be different on various systems.

Table 2-3: HTRF timing parameters

Parameter	Value	Comment
Number of pulses	30	The number of flashes per read.
Measurement delay	30 μ s	The delay to ensure the excitation pulse is no longer detectable.
Integration time per cycle (pulse)	400 μ s	The period for accumulating the signal.

Defining the number of flashes (pulses) cannot be used for comparative purposes because the flash and intensity rate varies from system to system.

There are two timing parameters which can be optimized to adjust the performance of the measurement as desired: time per plate or time per well, and integration time per cycle.

All low-light-level detection devices have some measurement noise in common. To average out the measurement noise, optimization of the time per well involves accumulating as many counts as possible. Within some range, you can reduce noise (CVs, detection limit) by increasing the read time per well, as far as is acceptable from throughput and sample stability considerations.

As the number of flashes (read time per well) is increased, several aspects of the data improve:

- Delta F values show less variability (better CVs).
- Small Delta F values are better distinguished from noise.
- Noise of background is reduced.

The second timing parameter which can be optimized is the Integration time per cycle. Care must be taken in optimizing the integration time to consider noise. Delta F is higher at low integration times, but noise is also high at low integration times. The optimum integration time is where noise is minimized while maximizing Delta F.

In the following example, the optimum integration time (read time per cycle) is displayed to be in the 500 μs to 1000 μs range, as noise is minimized and Delta F is still relatively high. Going greater than 1000 μs shows a sharp decline in Delta F without apparent improvement in noise.

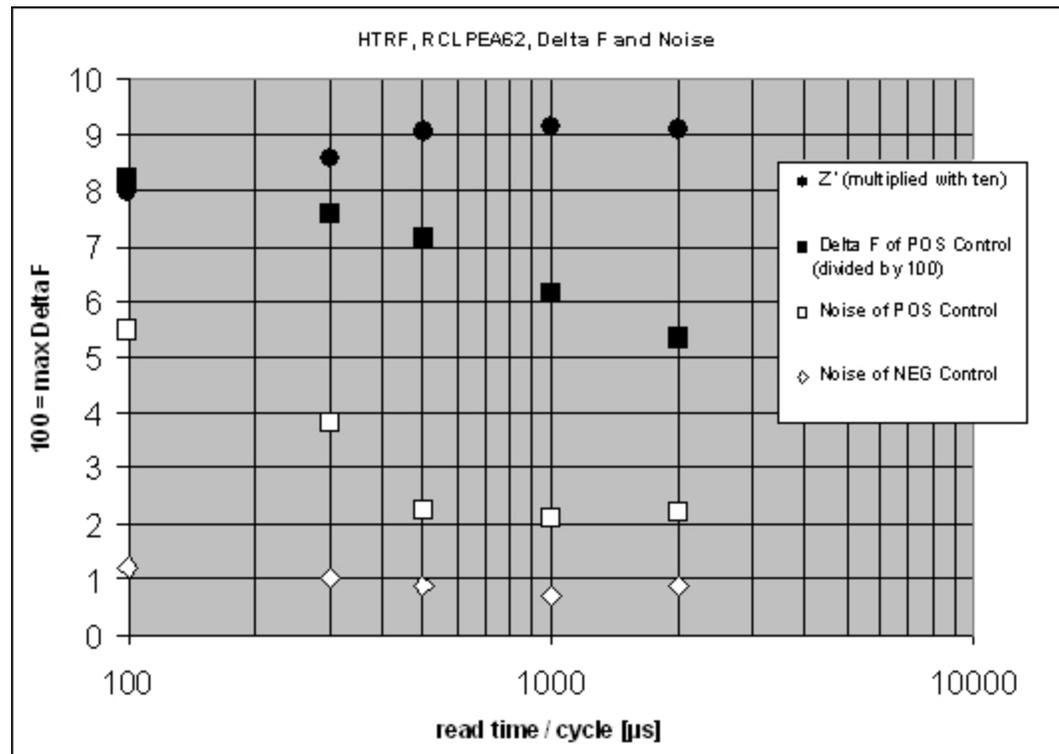


Figure 2-5: Relationship Between Integration Time, Noise, and Delta F

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{|Mean_{c+} - Mean_{c-}|}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.

Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must install an applicable detection cartridge in the instrument. Fluorescence polarization (FP) mode measures the relative change of polarization of emitted fluorescent compared to excitation light.

Fluorescence polarization detection is similar to fluorescence intensity, with the important difference that it uses plane-polarized light, rather than non-polarized light. Plate readers measure FP of the sample by detecting light emitted both parallel and perpendicular to the plane of excitation.

By using a fluorescent dye to label a small molecule, its binding to a different molecule of equal or greater size can be monitored through its speed of rotation.

When molecules are excited with polarized light, the polarization of the emitted light depends on the size of the molecule to which the fluorophore is bound. Larger molecules emit a higher percentage of polarized light, while smaller molecules emit a lower percentage of polarized light because of their rapid molecular movement. For this reason FP is generally used for molecular binding assays in high-throughput screening (HTS).

Fluorescence polarization mode returns two sets of data: one for fluorescence intensity parallel (P) to the excitation plane, and the other for fluorescence intensity perpendicular (S) to the excitation plane. These S and P values are used to calculate the Polarization (mP) and Anisotropy (r) values in SoftMax Pro Software.

The Fluorescence Polarization data for a sample is evaluated based on its relative position between the low and high control values. See [Analyzing Fluorescence Polarization Data on page 50](#).

Applications of Fluorescence Polarization

Fluorescence polarization measurements provide information on molecular orientation and mobility, and are generally used to quantify the success of a binding reaction between a smaller labeled ligand and a binding site at a much larger or immobilized molecule. FP can also be used to quantify the dissociation or cleavage of the labeled ligand from a binding site. FP is a homogeneous microplate assay technique and requires only mixing and measuring—no wash steps are required as in an ELISA. It can also be miniaturized, which makes it useful for high-throughput screening applications.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The following detection cartridges have fluorescence polarization read mode capability:

- [Fluorescence Polarization \(FP\) Detection Cartridges, see page 145](#)



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

Analyzing Fluorescence Polarization Data

Fluorescence polarization mode returns two sets of data: one for fluorescence intensity parallel (P) to the excitation plane, and the other for fluorescence intensity perpendicular (S) to the excitation plane. These S and P values are used to calculate the Polarization (mP) and Anisotropy (r) values in SoftMax Pro Software.

FP assays in microplates are generally designed with two control samples:

- LOW control sample: minimal polarization value resulting from unbound labeled ligand only
- HIGH control sample: maximum polarization value resulting from bound labeled ligand only

The FP data for a sample is evaluated based on its relative position between the low and high control values. Total intensity can also be determined from the raw data and is proportional to the quantity of label in a sample.

Analyzing and interpreting fluorescence polarization data generally consists of the following:

- [Blank Correction on page 51](#)
- [Data Reduction on page 51](#)
- [Data Qualification and Validation on page 52](#)

Blank Correction

Many fluorescence polarization assays use small fluorescent label concentrations in the lower nm range. In this range, blank controls become significant when compared to samples.

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the label and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

Background wells, containing all assay components minus the fluorophore, should be tested. If the signal in the background wells is more than 1/10 the signal in the wells containing fluorophore, then background wells should be run on each assay plate. The average raw signal from the background's parallel and perpendicular readings must be subtracted from the raw parallel and perpendicular readings of each sample well before the mP calculation is done.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

Data Reduction

Fluorescence polarization mode returns two sets of data: one for fluorescence intensity parallel (P) to the excitation plane, and the other for fluorescence intensity perpendicular (S) to the excitation plane. These S and P values are used to calculate the Polarization (mP) and Anisotropy (r) values in SoftMax Pro Software.

Although the raw S and P values are the true actual values returned from the instrument, the calculated Polarization (mP) and Anisotropy (r) values are treated as the raw data and become the basis for further reduction calculations.

Polarization (mP) is calculated as follows:

$$mP = 1000 * \frac{(\text{parallel} - (G * \text{perpendicular}))}{(\text{parallel} + (G * \text{perpendicular}))}$$

Anisotropy (r) is calculated as follows:

$$r = \frac{(\text{parallel} - (G * \text{perpendicular}))}{(\text{parallel} + (2G * \text{perpendicular}))}$$

The G factor, or grating factor, is used in fluorescence polarization to correct polarization data for optical artifacts, converting relative mP data to theoretical mP data. Optical systems, particularly with reflective components, pass light of different polarization with different efficiency. G factor corrects this instrumental bias.

Data Qualification and Validation

When validating the data of a fluorescence polarization measurement and the assay, the two factors to look at are the precision value and the Z' parameter.

The FP precision value is a measure of replicate uniformity determined by the standard deviation of replicates at a label concentration of 1 nM. Since the precision of a measured signal also depends on the read time, the read time must also be specified. A longer read time leads to a lower (better) precision value.

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{| \text{Mean}_{c+} - \text{Mean}_{c-} |}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.

The assay window is dependent on the fluorophore lifetime and relative size of the receptor to the ligand. Precision values are better (lower) at higher signals, which normally come from higher label concentrations.

For a given assay window, Z' is a downward sloping linear function. That is, as precision values get higher (worse), the Z' value gets lower (worse).

Precision is dependent upon assay characteristics (sample volume, label concentration) and read time. In many assays, the characteristics are defined and cannot be changed. In this case, the only way to improve precision is to increase the read time per well.

AlphaScreen Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must install an applicable detection cartridge in the instrument. ALPHA stands for Amplified Luminescent Proximity Homogeneous Assay. AlphaScreen® is a bead-based chemistry used to study molecular interactions between moieties A and B, for example. When a biological interaction between A and B moves beads (coated with A and B, respectively) together, a cascade of chemical reactions produce a greatly amplified signal. The cascade finally resulting in signal is triggered by laser excitation (680 nm), making a photosensitizer on the A-beads convert oxygen to an excited (singlet) state. That energized oxygen diffuses away from the A-bead. When reaching the B-bead in close proximity, it reacts with a thioxene derivative on the B-bead generating chemiluminescence at 370 nm. Energy transfer to a fluorescent dye on the same bead shifts the emission wavelength into the 520 nm to 620 nm range. The limited lifetime of singlet oxygen in solvent (~4 microseconds) lets diffusion reach up to only around 200 nm distance. Thus, only B-beads in the proximity of A-beads yield signal, which indicates binding between moieties A and B.

An AlphaScreen measurement includes a light pulse, by turning on the laser diode for a specified time, turning off the laser diode, followed by the measurement of the AlphaScreen signal, as specified in the measurement protocol timing parameters.



Note: AlphaScreen beads are light sensitive. Beads are best handled under subdued (<100 lux) or green filtered (Roscolux filters #389 from Rosco, or equivalent) light conditions. Do incubation steps in the dark.

The raw data can be normalized to counts per second. See [Analyzing AlphaScreen Data on page 54](#).

Applications of AlphaScreen

AlphaScreen reagent and assays are used for drug discovery purposes. Examples of AlphaScreen assays include:

- G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR) assay kits, for cAMP quantification or IP3 quantification.
- Tyrosine Kinase assays.
- Cytokine detection kits, such as TNF-alpha detection (immunoassay).

AlphaScreen read mode can also capture the Europium emission line of AlphaLISA®.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

To do AlphaScreen reads, the instrument requires [AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges](#), see [page 130](#)



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

For more information, go to www.perkinelmer.com.

ALPHASCREEN and ALPHALISA are registered trademarks of PerkinElmer, Inc.

Analyzing AlphaScreen Data

The conversion rate of photons to counts and relative fluorescence units (RFU) is individual for each reader. Therefore, raw data from the same microplate can seem to be different from one instrument to the next. Also, the data format used by instrument manufacturers might be counts normalized per second or not normalized counts, and therefore the raw data can be different by several orders of magnitude. It is important to know that the number of counts and the size of figures is in no way an indication of sensitivity. See [Detection Limit on page 55](#).

The raw data can be normalized to counts per second by selecting the **Normalization** option in the SoftMax Pro Software Settings dialog. See “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Analyzing and validating AlphaScreen data can consist of the following:

- [Background Correction on page 55](#)
- [Detection Limit on page 55](#)
- [Data Qualification and Validation on page 56](#)

Background Correction

Although background is significantly lower than with fluorescence intensity measurements, Molecular Devices recommends that you use blanks or assay controls for background correction. The background can be effectively measured using blank replicates. When reading a sample with small signal, an interference can occur from the afterglow of a very strong emitting adjacent sample that was measured just before. Such cross talk can occur through the wall of a white 384-well plate. To prevent such interference, you can select the **Interlaced Reading** option in the SoftMax Pro Software Settings dialog. This option reads only every other well in a checkerboard pattern, and then reads the microplate again to read the previously omitted wells.

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the label and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends that you run replicates for all blanks, controls, and samples. In this case, the blank value that can be subtracted is the average value of all blanks.

Detection Limit

The detection limit is the smallest sample concentration that can be measured reliably above the blank. Determining the detection limit requires taking a number of blank measurements and calculating an average value and standard deviation for the blanks. The detection threshold is defined as the average blank plus three standard deviations. If the average sample value measures above the threshold, the sample can be detected at a statistically significant level.

The detection limit can be described by the following equation:

$$\text{Det Limit} = \frac{3 \text{ Stdev}_{\text{blank}}}{\frac{\text{std} - \text{blank}}{\text{conc}_{\text{std}}}}$$

where conc_{std} is the concentration of the standard, $\text{StDev}_{\text{Blank}}$ is the standard deviation of the blank replicates, and blank and Std are average values of the replicates for the blank and standard wells.

Data Qualification and Validation

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{|\text{Mean}_{c+} - \text{Mean}_{c-}|}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.



CAUTION! The assay plate and the instrument should be kept at room temperature, since temperature variations cause fluctuations in signal.

Western Blot TRF Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must install an applicable detection cartridge in the instrument. Protein detection is an important task for pharmaceutical and clinical research, and Western Blots (WB), or protein immunoblots, are one of the most common methods employed for this purpose. Various techniques are used to detect proteins on Western Blot membranes including fluorescence, silver staining, and chemi-luminescence. However, each technique has its limitations, and there is a continuous need to improve quantitation, accuracy, and dynamic range of Western Blots.

The Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Western Blot Assay Kit is a novel system for protein analysis that is incorporated into a SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform. Membranes are incubated with Eu-chelate labeled secondary antibodies or streptavidin that bind specifically to the target protein-specific primary antibody. Europium has a long fluorescence lifetime, on the order of 1 msec, and detection is done in Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) mode which significantly reduces background from auto-fluorescence or other sources of short lifetime emissions. The membranes are placed into a microplate reader where they are scanned with the ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge. The method does not involve enzyme detection, and the Eu-chelates are resistant to photo-bleaching, so the signal remains stable for long periods of time (weeks to months). This permits repeat reading of membranes and the potential for comparison of band intensities to known standards for more accurate quantitation.

The TRF detection employs photon counting, so the theoretical dynamic range is $>10^5$. In practice, however, dynamic range is limited by saturation of binding sites on high-abundant bands and non-specific binding to background membrane. There is also no camera blooming, as can occur with chemi-luminescence or fluorescence detection, so the system gives sharp bands and excellent image quality.

Applications

- Identify the nature of the protein or epitope effectively. Also, it can be used as a tool for quantitative analysis of protein.
- Use for chromatography components analysis, sucrose gradient analysis.
- Test the endogenous or exogenous expression of phosphoprotein so as to detect the phosphorylation signal.
- Protein resilience in the function experiment.
- Structure domain analysis.
- Analysis of the protein expression level.
- Analysis of protein content in the serum.
- Analysis of regulatory proteins expressed in the cell cycle.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

The following detection cartridge has Western Blot TRF read mode capability:

- ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge

Analyzing Western Blot TRF Data

After scanning a membrane for Western Blot data, the data are displayed in the SoftMax Pro Software as an image. You can use the image tools in the **Plate** section to zoom, crop, colorize, and adjust the intensity of the image. You can also select a region of interest (ROI) and rescan the membrane at a higher resolution.

Western Blot membrane data are saved as a TIFF image that can be analyzed by the image-analysis tool of your choice. The SoftMax Pro Software comes with an installed version of the ImageJ software from U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH).

For best results, use the Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Western Blot Assay Kit that matches your application.

To ensure successful acquisition of Western Blot data, see the following topics:

- [Blocking Nonspecific Binding on page 58](#)
- [Handling the Membrane on page 58](#)

Blocking Nonspecific Binding

To reduce noise, use blocking buffer to reduce non-specific protein from binding with the membrane.

No single-blocking reagent is optimal for every antigen-antibody pair. Some primary antibodies can exhibit greatly reduced signal or different nonspecific binding in different blocking solutions. If you have difficulty detecting your target protein, changing the blocking solution can dramatically improve the performance. If the primary antibody has worked well in the past using chemiluminescent detection, try that same blocking solution for detection. Other commonly used blocking buffers other than BSA are 3% casein and 5% non-fat milk.

Milk-based blockers can contain IgG that can crossreact with anti-goat antibodies. This can significantly increase background and reduce antibody titer. Milk-based blockers can also contain endogenous biotin or phosphoepitopes that can cause higher background.

To prevent background speckles on blots, use high-quality, ultra-pure water for buffers.

Do not over-block. Extended blocking times can cause loss of target protein from the membrane.

Handling the Membrane

To scan the membrane in a SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the membrane must be placed in a Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Membrane Holder. See [Loading the Membrane into the Membrane Holder on page 161](#).



Note: Handle membranes by their edges only, using clean forceps. Do not touch the membrane with gloved or bare hands.

The maximum size for a membrane is 109 mm x 77 mm to let it fit in the membrane holder.

The Western Blot should be prepared using standard blotting procedures for the membrane being used. For optimal results, use Millipore Immobilon FL (IPFL00010). If using PVDF, pre-wet the membrane in 100% methanol.

Use enough antibody volume so that the entire membrane surface is sufficiently covered with liquid at all times. Use heat-seal bags if the volume is limiting. Do not let an area of the membrane dry out. Use agitation for all antibody incubations.

Small proteins can pass through the membrane during transfer (“blow-through”). To prevent this, use a membrane with a smaller pore size or reduce the transfer time.

Allow the blot to dry for a minimum of 1 hour before detection.

Do not wrap the membrane in plastic when scanning.

Imaging Read Mode

To use this read mode, you must have the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer installed with the SpectraMax i3 Instrument.

Imaging read mode does whole-cell imaging assays.

Whole-cell imaging assays are cell-based, or object-based, rather than the single-point measurements found in other types of microplate reads. These types of assays can yield more biologically meaningful results that can discriminate the fluorescence related to objects, such as cells or beads, from the bulk solution within a microplate well.

The measurement is primarily fluorescent with quantification of cell size, shape, area, and intensity. Label-free quantification is also supported through brightfield, transmitted light imaging. The camera resolution in the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer is sufficient to determine the approximate shape of small 8 micron objects, such as blood cells.

Other advantages of these assays include, the direct interrogation of individual cells instead of whole well or cell lysates that permit controlling for cell numbers and heterogeneity in cell-based assays. Also, increased sensitivity by both detecting a few fluorescent cells per well, as well as detecting cells that are, on average, less fluorescent.

The SpectraMax® MiniMax™ Imaging Cytometer 300 is capable of acquiring image data using transmitted light and two fluorescent channels during the same microplate read. In the SoftMax Pro Software **Settings** dialog, you can select the channels that you want to use for the acquisition. The StainFree™ Cell Detection Algorithm eliminates cell staining for cell counting and confluency measurements using proprietary transmitted light analysis technology.

You can obtain imaging data through visual inspection of the image or by using the analysis tools available in the SoftMax Pro Software. See [Analyzing Imaging Data on page 60](#).

Applications of Whole-Cell Imaging

Whole-cell imaging assays measure a diverse set of cellular responses, such as fluorescent protein expression (phosphorylated and total), cell viability (cell toxicity), cell apoptosis, and cell cycle analysis.

Supported dyes include the following:

- EarlyTox™ Cell Integrity Kit
- Fluorescein isothiocyanate (FITC)
- Calcein AM
- Alexa Fluor 488 or Alexa Fluor 647
- Cy5
- DRAQ5

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

Analyzing Imaging Data

You can obtain imaging data through visual inspection of the image or by using the analysis tools available in the SoftMax Pro Software.

In fluorescent imaging, the fluorescence in the sample is excited with light of a specified wavelength. The fluorophore emits at a longer wavelength that is captured in the image.

The software measures the intensity of the emitted fluorescence and estimates the intensity of the background in the image.

You can select one of the following image analysis types.

Discrete Object Analysis

Discrete Object Analysis uses proprietary algorithms to analyze separate objects, or cells, based on multiple parameters including the signal intensity over the background and the size of the objects. Use the SoftMax Pro Software to define the settings:

- Click **Find Objects** to enter size and intensity values or use proprietary algorithms with the provided drawing tools to graphically define the objects and the background areas for the analysis.
- Click **Classify Objects** to define separate measurements for different types of found objects, or cells.
- Click **Select Measurements** to view the results of the analysis for the selected wells.

Field Analysis

Field Analysis uses proprietary algorithms to analyze confluent areas based on multiple parameters including the signal intensity over the background and the size of the areas. Use the SoftMax Pro Software to define the settings:

- Click **Find Confluent Areas** to use proprietary algorithms with the provided drawing tools to graphically define the confluent areas and the background areas for the analysis.
- Click **Select Measurements** to view the results of the analysis for the selected wells.

Analysis Measurement Parameters

Depending on the needs of your application, you can use one or more of the following analysis measurement parameters for the region of interest (ROI) in your experiment:

- **Object Count** gives the total number of objects detected in the image. This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas.
- **Field Count** gives the total number of confluent areas detected in the image. This measurement is not used for discrete object analysis.
- **Object Percentage** gives the percentage the objects detected in the image by classification. This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas.
- **Covered Area** gives the combined area of all the objects or confluent areas detected in the image as a percentage of the entire image area.
- **Object Area** gives the average area of the objects detected in the image expressed in μm^2 . This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas.
- **Field Area** gives the average area of the confluent areas detected in the image expressed in μm^2 . This measurement is not used for discrete object analysis.
- **Object Roundness** gives the average roundness of each object detected in the image. A shape factor of 1.00 is perfectly round, while a shape factor of 0.00 is not round at all. This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas.
- **Field Roundness** gives the average roundness of each confluent area detected in the image. A shape factor of 1.00 is perfectly round, while a shape factor of 0.00 is not round at all. This measurement is not used for discrete object analysis.
- **Object Average Intensity** gives the average fluorescent signal intensity of the objects detected in the image. This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas. This measurement is not used for transmitted light (TL).
- **Field Average Intensity** gives the average fluorescent signal intensity of the confluent areas detected in the image. This measurement is not used for discrete object analysis. This measurement is not used for transmitted light (TL).
- **Object Intensity** gives the average total fluorescent signal intensity of the objects detected in the image. This measurement is not used for field analysis of confluent areas. This measurement is not used for transmitted light (TL).
- **Field Intensity** gives the average total fluorescent signal intensity of the confluent areas detected in the image. This measurement is not used for discrete object analysis. This measurement is not used for transmitted light (TL).
- **Total Intensity** gives the combined total fluorescent signal intensity of the objects or confluent areas detected in the image expressed in million intensity counts. This measurement is not used for transmitted light (TL).

Chapter 3: Unpacking and Setting Up the Instrument

Before unpacking and setting up the SpectraMax® i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, prepare a dry, flat work area that has sufficient space for the instrument, host computer, and required cables. See [Instrument Specifications on page 183](#).

Unpacking and setting up the instrument includes the following procedures:

- Unpacking the instrument and saving the original packaging. See [Unpacking the Instrument on page 65](#).
- Removing the transport locks from the microplate drawer and the detection cartridge drawer. See [Removing the Transport Locks on page 69](#).
- Connecting the instrument cables and installing the controlling software. See [Connecting the Instrument Cables on page 72](#).

You can also connect a gas supply line to the rear of the instrument. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply on page 74](#).



Note: If you are also installing the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, follow the unpacking instructions for the microplate reader in this guide and then refer to the installation instructions for the cytometer. See [Installing and Setting Up the Cytometer on page 92](#).

Contents of the Package

The package contains the instrument and the tools and accessories included in the accessory tool box and that are required for installing the instrument as follows:

Table 3-1: Package Contents

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5025026	Installation guide
	YW 000 006	Hex key, 2.0 mm
	5018636	SoftMax Pro Software with Product Key
	VZ 000 014	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot)
	VN 18S S01 or VN 18F F01 01	Power cord, 115V or Power cord, 230V

For a complete list of the contents of the package, see the enclosed packing list.



Note: Detection cartridges are shipped separately.

Unpacking the Instrument

The packaging is specifically designed to protect the SpectraMax i3 Instrument during transportation.

Transport locks are placed on the detection cartridge drawer and the microplate drawer to protect the instrument from damage during shipping. Transport locks must be removed before powering on the instrument.



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.



Note: The shipping box and all packaging materials, including transport locks, should be retained in case of future transport needs. Do not use tools that can damage the packaging or the instrument.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 3-2: Required Tool

Part Number	Description
Not applicable	Box cutter

To unpack the instrument:

1. Check the box for visible damage that occurred during transportation. In case of damage, inform the supplier immediately and keep the damaged packaging.



CAUTION! Keep the box upright. Do not tip or tilt the box or place it on its side.

2. With the box facing up as indicated on the packaging, use a box cutter to carefully cut open the side of the box labeled **Open Here**.



Figure 3-1: Opening the Box

3. Grasp the handle on the cardboard and slide the instrument out of the box.

* **Tip:** It might be easier if a second person holds the box in place while the instrument is slid out on the cardboard.

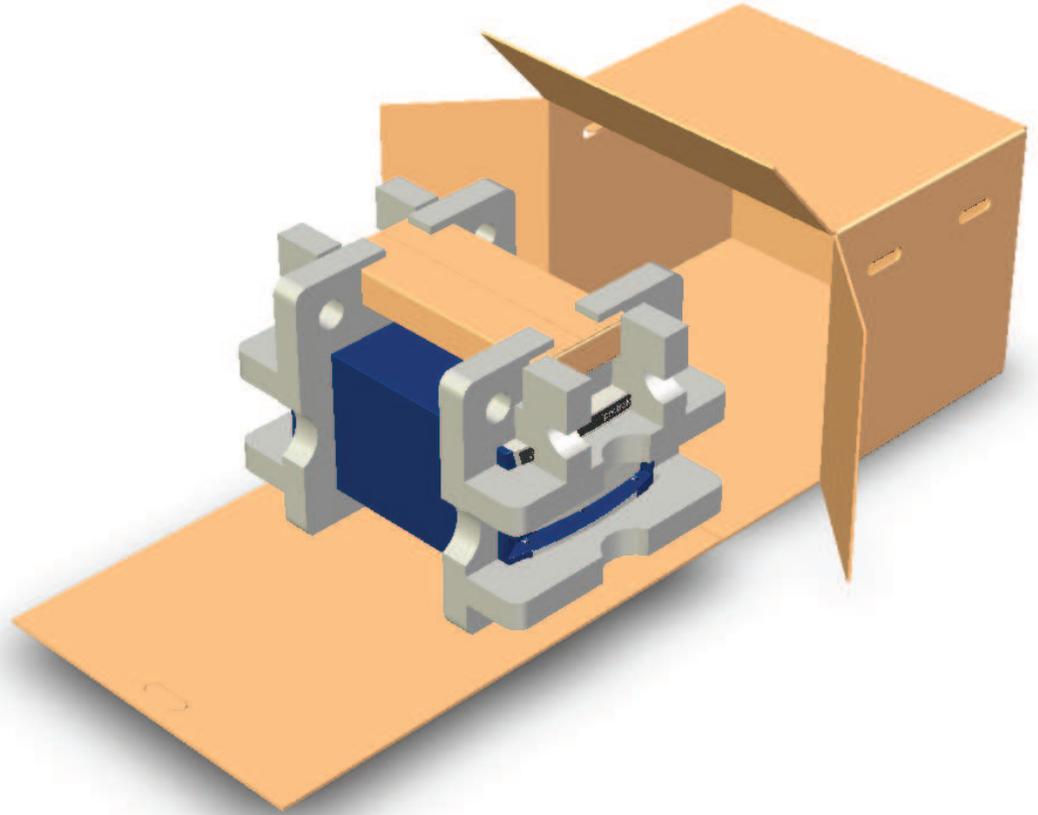


Figure 3-2: Sliding the Instrument Out of the Box

4. Remove the accessory tool box (1).

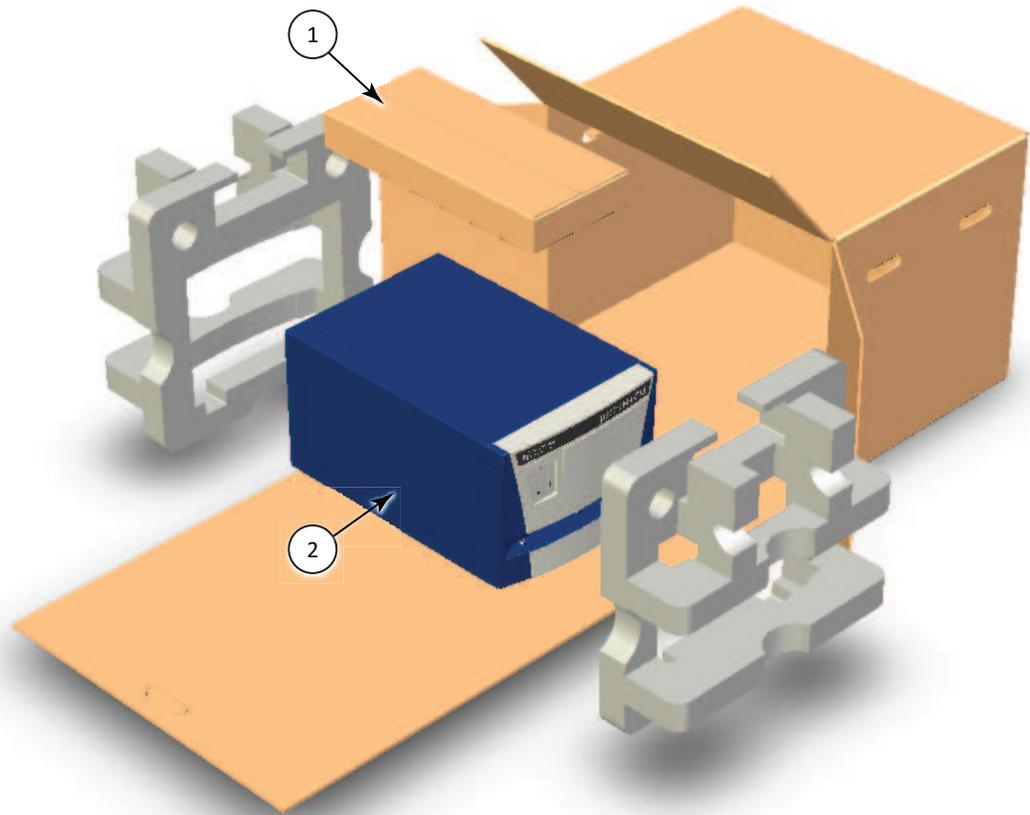


Figure 3-3: Removing the Accessory Tool Box and the Foam Packing

Item	Description
1	Accessory Tool Box
2	SpectraMax i3 Instrument



CAUTION! Keep the instrument upright and level when lifting. Do not tip or shake the instrument to prevent damage to the moving components inside the instrument.

5. Lift one end of the instrument slightly and remove the foam packaging from that end.
6. Gently return the instrument to the ground.
7. Lift the other end of the instrument slightly and remove the foam packaging from that end.
8. Gently return the instrument to the ground.
9. Remove the large plastic bag from the instrument. It might be necessary to slightly lift the instrument to get the bag over the feet.

10. With one person on each end, lift the instrument and gently place the instrument on a dry, flat area. For information about the weight of the instrument, see [Instrument Specifications on page 183](#).



Note: The feet are sticky and the instrument does not slide well. It can mark the work surface if slid.

Removing the Transport Locks



CAUTION! The instrument can be damaged if the transport locks are not removed before the instrument is powered on.

Transport locks are placed on the detection cartridge drawer and the microplate drawer to protect the instrument from damage during shipping. Transport locks must be removed before powering on the instrument.



Note: If you are installing the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, leave the transport locks in place until after the cytometer is attached to the microplate reader. See [Installing and Setting Up the Cytometer on page 92](#).

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 3-3: Required Tool

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	YW 000 006	Hex key, 2.0 mm



CAUTION! Do not touch or loosen screws or parts other than those specifically designated in the instructions. Doing so could cause misalignment and possibly void the warranty.



CAUTION! The front cover is held onto the front of the instrument by powerful magnets. Keep magnetic storage devices or strips, such as hard drives, key cards, and credit cards, away from the instrument covers.

To remove the transport locks:

1. Firmly pull on the front cover to remove it and then set it aside. The front cover is held onto the front of the instrument by powerful magnets.

*** Tip:** It is easiest to remove the front cover by pulling from the bottom.



Figure 3-4: Detection Cartridge Drawer Cover Removed

2. Turn the detection cartridge drawer transport lock (2) counter-clockwise until it is free of the threaded hole in the floor of the drawer compartment.

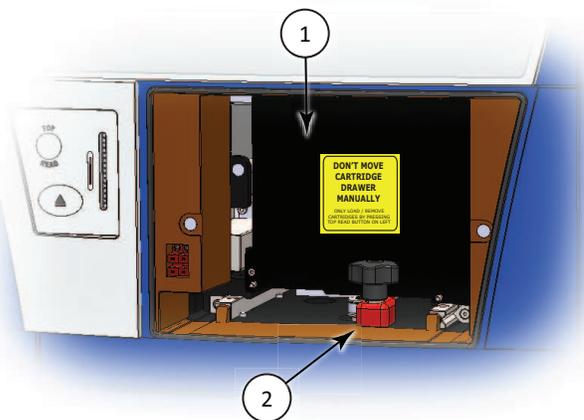


Figure 3-5: Detection Cartridge Drawer Transport Lock

Item	Description
1	Detection cartridge drawer
2	Detection cartridge drawer transport lock

3. Gently slide the detection cartridge drawer (1) forward until it is outside of the main instrument.

4. Lower the detection cartridge drawer transport lock (2) to remove it from the detection cartridge drawer. Store the transport lock in the instrument accessories toolbox.
5. Gently push the detection cartridge drawer back inside the instrument.
6. Replace the front cover by aligning the magnets on the inside of the front cover with the magnets on the instrument base.
7. Gently pull the yellow tab protruding from the microplate chamber door to open the door. The microplate drawer door (5) must be held open manually while removing the transport lock.



Note: Be careful not to tear the yellow tab. It must remain attached to the transport lock to make it easier to open the microplate chamber door.

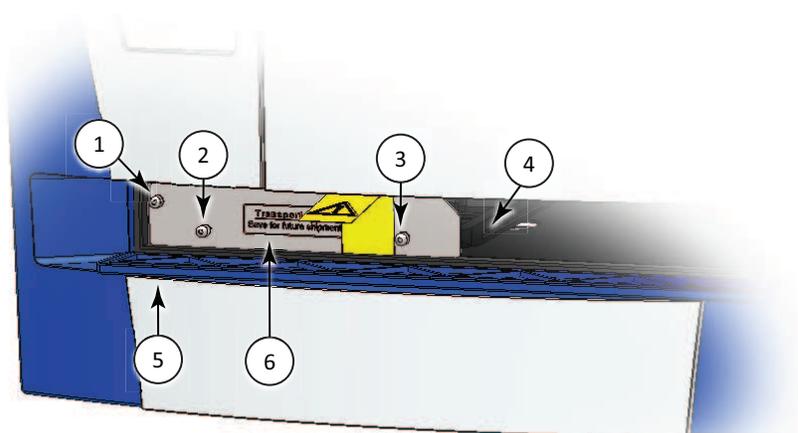


Figure 3-6: Microplate Drawer Transport Lock

Item	Description
1	Screw #1 fastens the lock to the internal frame of the instrument
2	Screw #2 fastens the lock to the microplate drawer
3	Screw #3 fastens the lock to the microplate drawer
4	Microplate drawer
5	Microplate chamber door in open position
6	Microplate drawer transport lock

8. Use the provided 2.0 mm hex key to loosen screw #1 in the upper-left corner of the transport lock (6) until the lock disconnects from the instrument frame. The screw has a retaining washer that prevents it from being removed from the lock.

*** Tip:** After loosening screw #1, pull the microplate drawer slightly out of the instrument to hold the chamber door open.

9. Loosen screws #2 and #3 until the lock comes free of the microplate drawer (4) and you can remove the lock from the instrument. The screws have retaining washers that prevent them from being removed from the lock. Store the transport lock in the instrument accessories toolbox.
10. Gently push the microplate drawer (4) back inside the instrument and close the chamber door (5).
11. Save the original carton, foam inserts, accessories toolbox, and transport locks in case the instrument must be shipped in the future.

Connecting the Instrument Cables

The power cords and USB cables connect to the ports on the rear of the instrument.



Note: If you are installing the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, do not use this procedure. See [Installing and Setting Up the Cytometer on page 92](#).

This procedure requires the following tools and accessories:

Table 3-4: Required Tools and Accessories

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5018636	SoftMax Pro Software with Product Key
	VZ 000 014	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot)
	VN 18S S01 or VN 18F F01 01	Power cord, 1 meter (3.3 foot)

Connect the instrument to the controlling computer using the supplied USB cable. Use the power cord supplied with the instrument to connect the instrument to a grounded wall outlet. You can optionally connect a gas supply line. A gas supply line is not supplied in the package.

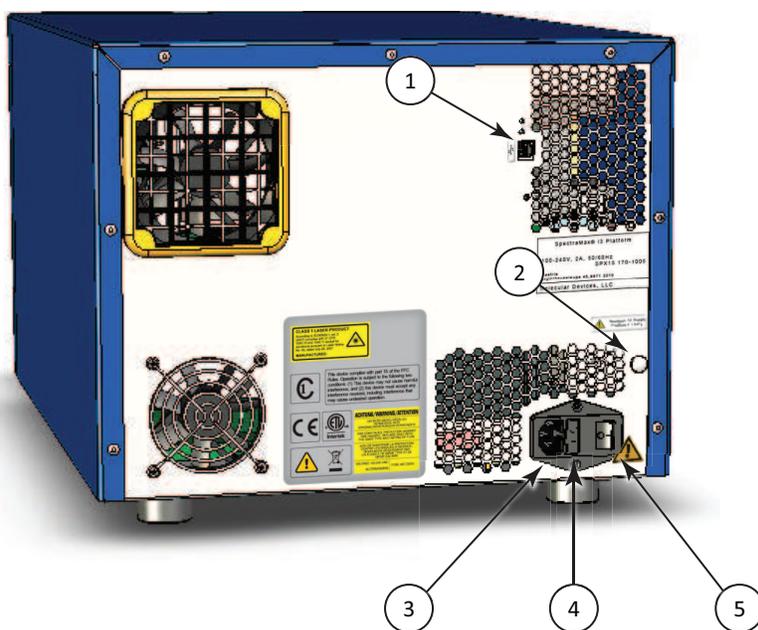


Figure 3-7: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	USB Port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Power port
4	Fuse carrier
5	Power switch

To connect the instrument cables:

1. Make sure that the instrument and host computer are placed on a dry, flat work area with sufficient space for both devices and the required cables. To ensure sufficient ventilation and provide access for disconnecting power from the instrument, maintain a 20 cm to 30 cm (7.9 in. to 11.8 in.) gap between the rear of the instrument and the wall.
2. Make sure that the power switch (5) on the rear of the instrument is in the Off position. See [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#).
Do not turn on the power to the instrument until after the software has been installed.
3. Turn on the power to the host computer.
4. Install the SoftMax Pro Software on the computer. See the SoftMax Pro Software installation guide or user guide.



Note: The instrument is supported by SoftMax Pro Software version 6.3 or later.

5. Connect one end of the supplied USB cable to one of the USB ports on the computer, and then connect the other end of the USB cable to the USB port (1) on the rear of the instrument.

6. Connect the supplied power cord to the power port (3) on the rear of the instrument, and then connect the other end of the power cord to a grounded electrical wall outlet. It might be necessary to remove the temporary warning label before connecting the power cord to the microplate reader.
7. If desired, connect a gas supply to the instrument. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply on page 74](#).
8. Set the power switch (5) on the rear of the instrument to the On position and wait for the instrument to complete its initialization routine. See [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#).
9. Start the SoftMax Pro Software. It might be necessary to install USB drivers before starting the software.

Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply

A gas supply, such as a CO₂, nitrogen, or other gas supply, can be connected to the SpectraMax i3 Instrument. This is useful when reading plates as part of a cell-based assay in which a CO₂ environment needs to be provided to keep cell cultures alive. The gas supply is not regulated or monitored by the instrument or software.

These procedures require the following tools and accessories:

Table 3-5: Required Tools and Accessories

Part Number	Description
Not applicable	Polyurethane tubing, outside diameter = 4.0 mm
Not applicable	slot-head screwdriver
S MS 135 100	Gas inlet unlock tool (not provided with the instrument)

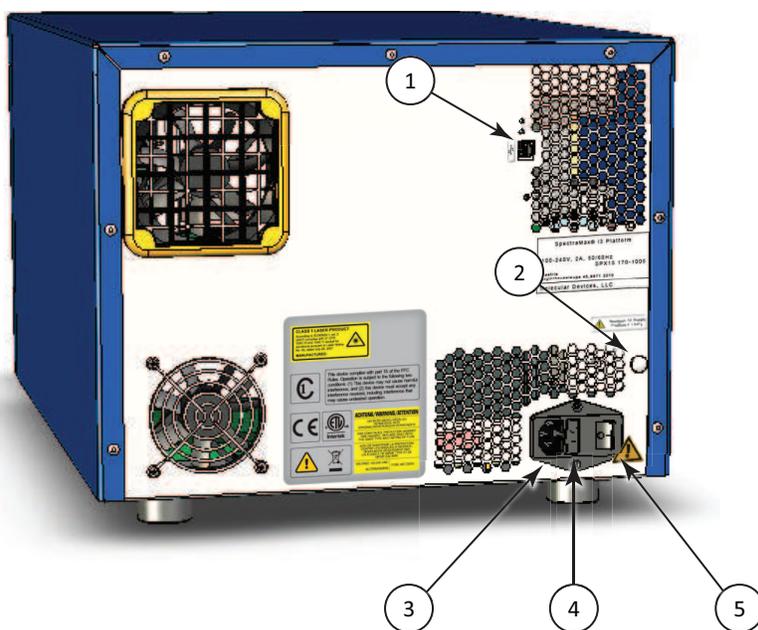


Figure 3-8: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	USB Port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Power port
4	Fuse carrier
5	Power switch



WARNING! Use a compressed gas supply in a well-ventilated area. The instrument is not air-tight, and so gas can escape into the atmosphere surrounding the instrument. When using potentially toxic gas, always observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer to maintain a safe working environment.

To connect a gas supply to the instrument:

1. Make sure that the power switch (5) on the rear of the instrument is in the off position.
2. Using a slot-head screwdriver, pry off the small black cap (2) on the rear of the instrument along the right edge to access the quick-connect fitting. Save the cap for later use.
3. Connect the tubing to the quick-connect fitting.
4. Connect the other end of the tubing to the gas supply.
5. Set the gas supply to the desired input pressure.



Note: For the maximum permitted air supply pressure for the gas inlet and polyurethane tubing specifications, see [Instrument Specifications on page 183](#).

To disconnect the polyurethane tubing from the instrument:

1. Make sure that the power switch on the rear of the instrument is in the off position.
2. Turn off the gas supply at the source and wait a sufficient time for the pressure to dissipate.
3. Use the gas inlet unlock tool to press the quick-connect fitting and release the tubing.



Note: The gas inlet unlock tool is not supplied with the instrument.

4. Remove the tubing from the quick-connect fitting.
5. Replace the black cap over the quick-connect fitting.

Chapter 4: Using the Instrument

Before operating the instrument or performing maintenance operations, make sure that you are familiar with the [Safety Information on page 7](#) and make sure it is set up as instructed in [Unpacking and Setting Up the Instrument on page 63](#).

For information on controlling the instrument with the software, see the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

This section includes the following topics:

- [Front Panel Controls and Indicators on page 78](#)
- [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#)
- [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#)
- [Using Detection Cartridges on page 84](#)

Front Panel Controls and Indicators

The front panel of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument has LED status indicators that provide information about instrument status, and a key pad that gives you hardware-based controls for opening and closing the detection cartridge drawer and the microplate drawer.

- To open or close the microplate drawer, press the load/eject button. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#).
- To open or close the detection cartridge drawer, press the TOP READ button. See [Using Detection Cartridges on page 84](#).

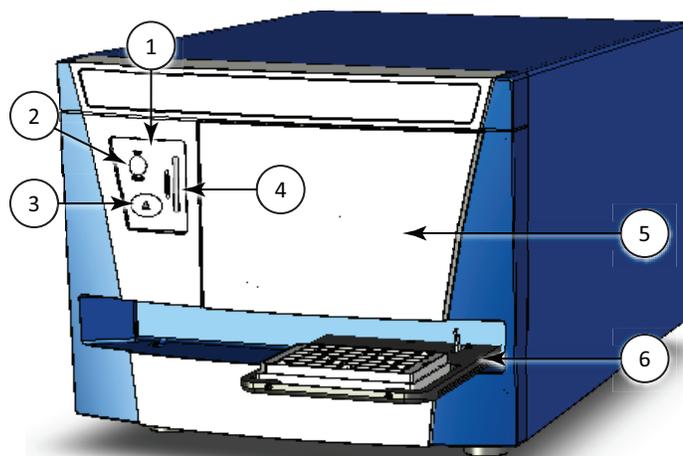


Table 4-1: The SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
1	Key pad
2	Load/eject button for detection cartridge drawer
3	Load/eject button for microplate drawer
4	Status LEDs
5	Detection cartridge drawer
6	Microplate drawer

Status LEDs

The color and activity of LED status indicators on the front of the microplate reader provide information about the instrument status.

Table 4-2: LED Status Indicators

LED Color and Activity	Instrument Status
Green LED glowing solidly	The instrument is in the ready state.
Amber LED blinking	The instrument is not ready due to an error occurring during initialization. View the error message in the software.
Green LED glowing solidly, and Amber LED glowing solidly or blinking	The instrument is communicating with the software. Optics, drawers, or other mechanical items are moving within the instrument.
Red LED glowing solidly	The front panel has been removed from the detection cartridge drawer, or the microplate chamber door has not closed properly.
All status LEDs circulating from top to bottom	The instrument is performing a read operation.

The has a separate status LED panel. See [Cytometer Status LEDs on page 113](#).

Turning the Instrument On and Off

The power switch and power connection are on the rear of the instrument.

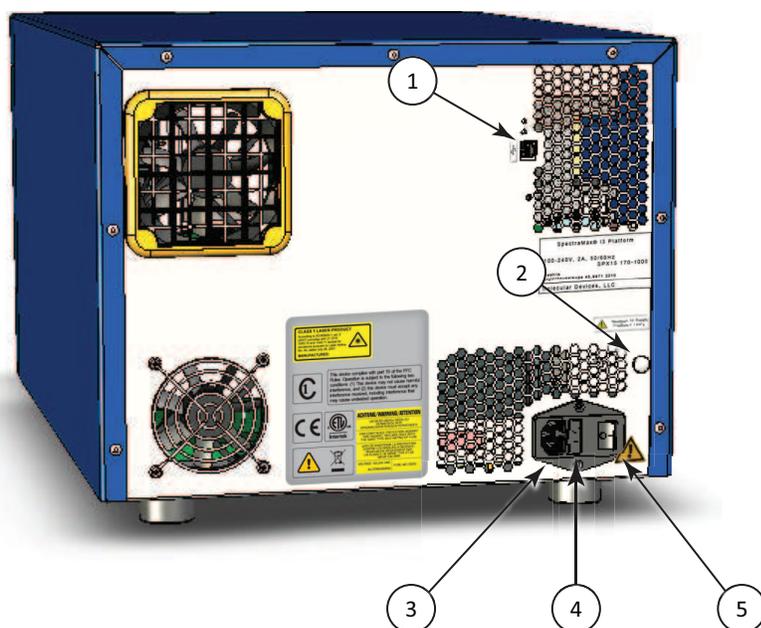


Figure 4-1: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	USB Port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Power port
4	Fuse carrier
5	Power switch

To ensure sufficient ventilation and provide access for disconnecting power from the instrument, maintain a 20 cm to 30 cm (7.9 in. to 11.8 in.) gap between the rear of the instrument and the wall.

To turn the instrument on or off, press the power switch to place the rocker in the on or off position.

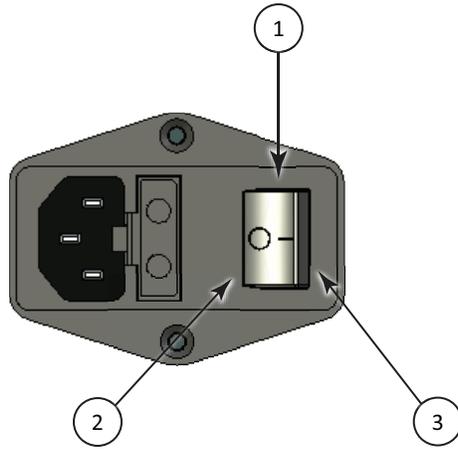


Figure 4-2: Power Switch

Item	Description
1	Power switch
2	Off
3	On

Before connecting or disconnecting the power cord, make sure that the power switch on the rear of the instrument is in the Off position.

Loading and Unloading Microplates

To load or unload a microplate:

1. On the front panel of the instrument, press the load/eject button to move the microplate drawer outside of the instrument.
2. Place the microplate on or remove it from the microplate drawer.



Note: Microplates are placed on the microplate drawer in landscape orientation with well A1 in the left corner closest to the instrument.

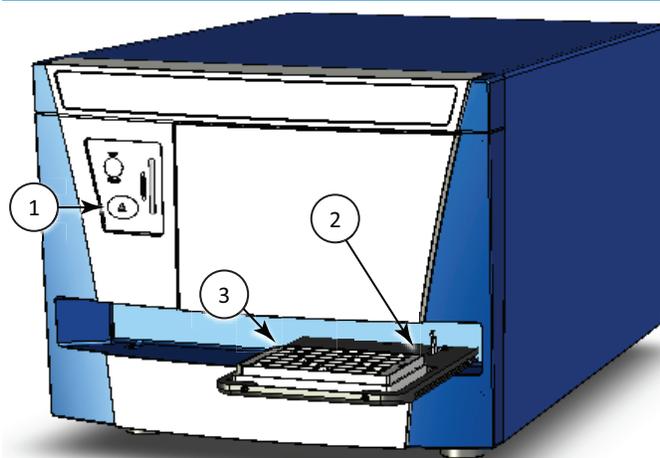


Figure 4-3: Microplate Drawer with Microplate Loaded

Item	Description
1	Load/eject button for the microplate drawer
2	Microplate drawer
3	Well A1 on the microplate

3. Press the load/eject button to move the microplate drawer inside of the instrument.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the microplate height and read height must be set accurately before starting a read. If the microplate is lidded, you must select **Is Lidded** in the **Settings** dialog and make sure that the microplate height with a lid is set accurately in the **Plate Editor** before starting a read. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Selecting Suitable Microplate Types

Depending on the application, the instrument can read 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, and 384-well microplates and strip wells. For micro-volume measurements, the instrument supports SpectraDrop 24-well micro-volume microplates and SpectraDrop 64-well micro-volume microplates. The instrument is capable of reading 1536-well microplates when used with specific detection cartridges.

When reading optical density at wavelengths below 340 nm, special UV-transparent, disposable, or quartz microplates that permit transmission of the far UV spectra must be used.

Top and bottom reads are available for fluorescence detection using the built in monochromator.



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

As well as the microplates supported in the SoftMax Pro Software microplate list, you can use the software to define a new microplate type using the specifications from the manufacturer for well size, spacing, and distance from the microplate edge.

The type of microplate and the way it is handled can have an effect on the measurement performance of the instrument. Select a microplate type with properties suited for the application and for use with multi-mode microplate readers.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the height of the microplate must not exceed 25 mm.

Some general microplate handling guidelines include:

- Never touch the clear well bottom of microplates.
- Visually inspect the bottom and rim of the microplate before use to make sure it is free of dirt and contaminants.
- Keep unused microplates clean and dry.
- Make sure the strips on strip plates are inserted correctly and level with the frame.
- Do not use V-bottom microplates for absorbance reads, bottom reads, or imaging. Irregular plastic density in the tip of the well can cause inaccurate measurements.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument, the microplate height and read height must be set accurately before starting a read. If the microplate is lidded, you must select **Is Lidded** in the **Settings** dialog and make sure that the microplate height with a lid is set accurately in the **Plate Editor** before starting a read. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Using Detection Cartridges

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

Application notes with specific application protocol suggestions can be found in the Information Center and the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices web site at www.moleculardevices.com.

A detection cartridge can occupy one or more positions, depending on size and functionality. Installation and removal of each detection cartridge is the same regardless of the number of slots it occupies in the detection cartridge drawer. The detection cartridge drawer has four (4) slots available for installing detection cartridges.

For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.



CAUTION! To prevent dust from collecting inside the instrument, the detection cartridge drawer should be open only for as long as necessary to install or remove detection cartridges. Keep the detection cartridge drawer closed whenever possible.

For instructions for installing or removing detection cartridges, see the following topics:

- [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#)
- [Removing a Detection Cartridge on page 88](#)

For information about the applications and read modes enabled for a specific detection cartridge, see [Available Detection Cartridges on page 129](#).

Installing a Detection Cartridge

The installed detection cartridges are automatically detected by the SoftMax Pro Software. When detected, they show in the SoftMax Pro Software **Settings** dialog enabling the read modes for the installed detection cartridges. The detection cartridges must be installed in the instrument to enable them for data acquisition in the SoftMax Pro Software.

There are four (4) slots available in the detection cartridge drawer. You can install a detection cartridge into an available slot.



Note: When using the in offline mode, all detection cartridges are available in the **Settings** dialog.

To install a detection cartridge:

1. Press the **TOP READ** button on the front panel to open the detection cartridge drawer.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the installed detection cartridges and the instrument, do not manually slide the detection cartridge drawer in or out when the instrument is powered on or when one or more detection cartridges are installed in the drawer.

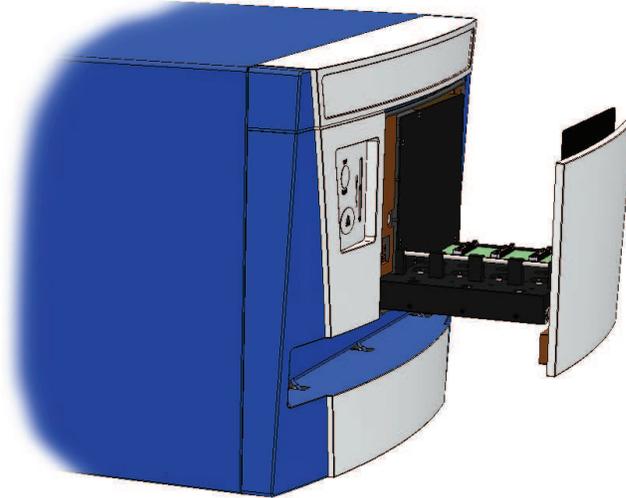


Figure 4-4: Detection Cartridge Drawer Open

2. Select the slot or slots on the detection cartridge drawer for the detection cartridge.
3. Remove the red cap from the detection cartridge before installation, if supplied with the detection cartridge.
4. Position the two small holes and the connector pins on the detection cartridge over the holder pins and connector for the detection cartridge slot.



Note: Some detection cartridges occupy more than one slot. For the installation requirements for a specific detection cartridge, see [Available Detection Cartridges on page 129](#).

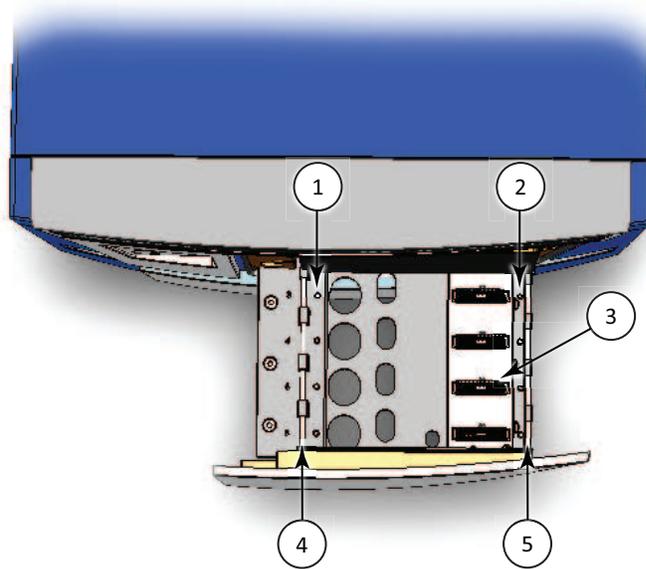


Figure 4-5: Top View of Detection Cartridge Drawer

Item	Description
1	Holder pin
2	Holder pin
3	Detection cartridge connector
4	Retaining rod
5	Retaining rod

5. Gently but firmly push the detection cartridge onto the holder pins and connector so that the detection cartridge is fully seated in the detection cartridge slot.
6. Push the two retaining clips on either side of the detection cartridge so that they fasten to the retaining rods on each side of the detection cartridge drawer.

 **Note:** Detection cartridges that occupy more than one slot have two retaining clips on each side. Fasten all retaining clips to the retaining rods.

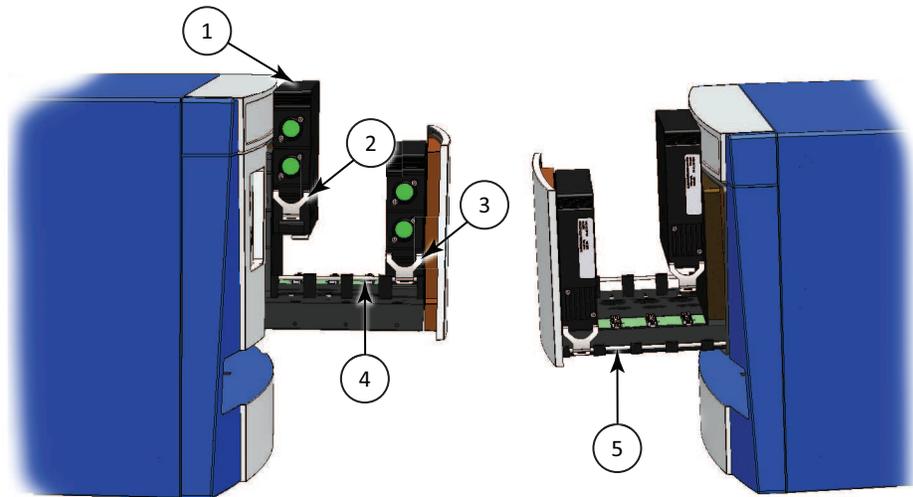


Figure 4-6: Detection Cartridge Retaining Clips and Retaining Rods

Item	Description
1	Detection cartridge
2	Retaining clip unattached
3	Retaining clip attached
4	Retaining rod
5	Retaining rod

7. Install more detection cartridges, if desired.
8. Ensure that all the installed cartridges are evenly aligned.
9. Press the **TOP READ** button on the front panel to close the detection cartridge drawer.
10. Start the and connect to the instrument.

If the software is running and connected to the instrument, go to the **Operations** tab in the ribbon and click **Refresh** to let the software detect the installed detection cartridges.



CAUTION! To prevent dust from collecting inside the instrument, the detection cartridge drawer should be open only for as long as necessary to install or remove detection cartridges. Keep the detection cartridge drawer closed whenever possible.

Removing a Detection Cartridge

It is not necessary to remove a detection cartridge when it is not in use. You can, however, remove a detection cartridge to make room for other detection cartridges or when the instrument is being packed for shipping. After a detection cartridge is removed, it should be stored in its detection cartridge box in a dry, dust-free, controlled environment.

To remove a detection cartridge from the instrument:

1. Press the **TOP READ** button on the front panel to open the detection cartridge drawer.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the installed detection cartridges and the instrument, do not manually slide the detection cartridge drawer in or out when the instrument is powered on or when one or more detection cartridges are installed in the drawer.

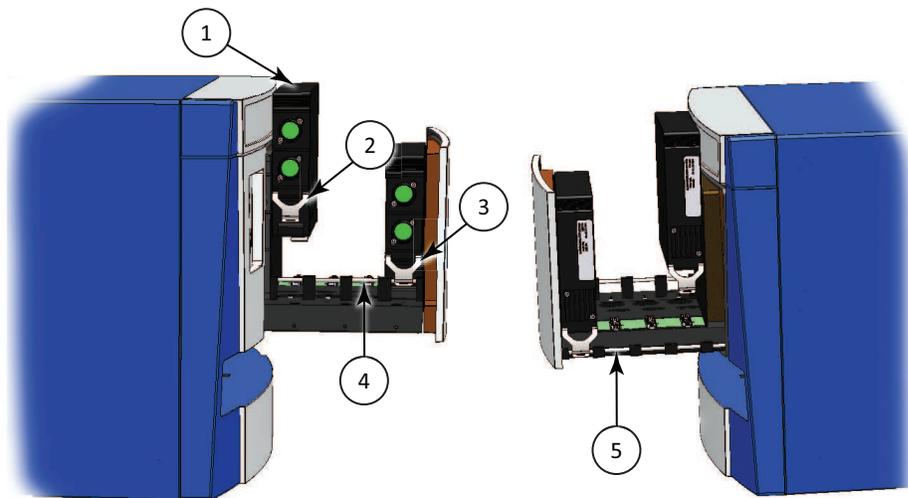


Figure 4-7: Detection Cartridge Retaining Clips and Retaining Rods

Item	Description
1	Detection cartridge
2	Retaining clip unattached
3	Retaining clip attached
4	Retaining rod
5	Retaining rod

2. Place the end of a slot-head screwdriver in the slot on the retaining clip and use it as a lever to unfasten the retaining clips on either side of the detection cartridge.



Note: Detection cartridges that occupy more than one slot have two retaining clips on each side. Unfasten all retaining clips from the retaining rods.

3. Lift the detection cartridge straight up off of the connector and holder pins on the detection cartridge slot.
4. Place the red cap on the detection cartridge, if supplied with the detection cartridge.
5. When not in use, store the detection cartridge in its original packaging.
6. Remove more detection cartridges, if desired.
7. Press the **TOP READ** button on the front panel to close the detection cartridge drawer.



CAUTION! To prevent dust from collecting inside the instrument, the detection cartridge drawer should be open only for as long as necessary to install or remove detection cartridges. Keep the detection cartridge drawer closed whenever possible.

The SpectraMax® MiniMax™ Imaging Cytometer adds imaging capability to the SpectraMax i3 Instrument to visually inspect your sample and to run cell-based assays at cellular or whole-cell resolution. The cytometer uses solid-state illumination, a digital camera, a 4x objective lens, laser auto-focus, and auto-exposure to capture fluorescent or label-free images of a sample at the bottom of the microplate wells. The cytometer supports 96-well and 384-well, flat-bottom, clear-bottom microplates.

The SpectraMax® MiniMax™ Imaging Cytometer 300 is capable of acquiring image data using transmitted light and two fluorescent channels during the same microplate read. In the SoftMax Pro Software **Settings** dialog, you can select the channels that you want to use for the acquisition. The StainFree™ Cell Detection Algorithm eliminates cell staining for cell counting and confluency measurements using proprietary transmitted light analysis technology.

To do brightfield, transmitted-light imaging, you must install the SpectraMax i3 Platform Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge in the detection cartridge drawer. See [Transmitted Light \(TL\) Detection Cartridge on page 115](#).

You can create protocols that use the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer in the SoftMax® Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Installing and Setting Up the Cytometer

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer attaches to the bottom of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform.

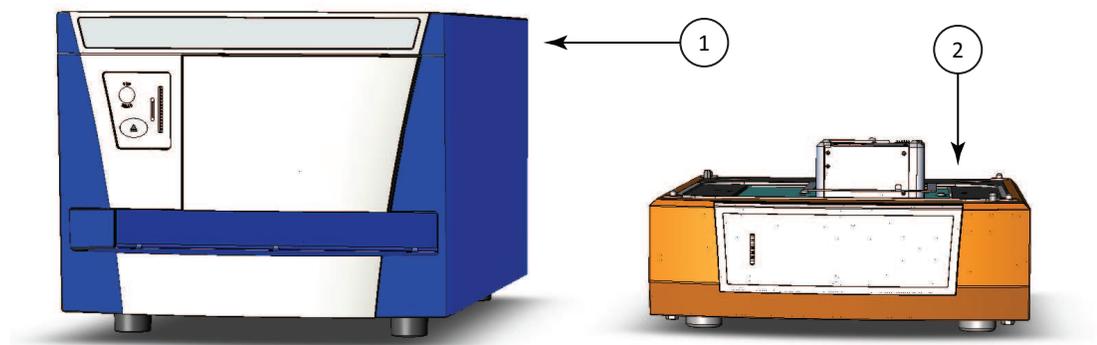


Figure 5-1: Microplate Reader and Cytometer

Item	Description
1	SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform (microplate reader)
2	SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer (cytometer)



Note: If you are installing the SpectraMax i3 Instrument at the same time, unpack the microplate reader before setting up the cytometer, but leave the microplate reader transport locks in place until after the cytometer is attached to the microplate reader. See [Unpacking and Setting Up the Instrument on page 63](#).

Installing and setting up the cytometer includes the following steps:

- Remove the retaining screws and the optics cover that protect the optical components during shipping. See [Removing the Shipping Protections on page 96](#).
- Attach the cytometer to the bottom of the microplate reader. See [Attaching the Imaging Cytometer to the Microplate Reader on page 98](#).
- Remove the transport locks from the microplate and detection cartridge drawers. See [Removing the Transport Locks on page 69](#).
- Install the controlling software and connect the instrument cables. See [Connecting the Cables on page 103](#).
- Calibrate the well image for the cytometer. See [Calibrating the Cytometer on page 108](#).

To do brightfield, transmitted-light imaging, you must install the SpectraMax i3 Platform Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge in the detection cartridge drawer. See [Transmitted Light \(TL\) Detection Cartridge on page 115](#).

Contents of the Cytometer Package

The package contains the imaging cytometer and the tools and accessories required for installing the instrument as follows:

Table 5-1: Cytometer Package Contents for Instrument Installation

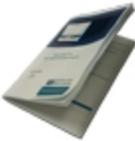
Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5024111	Installation guide
	Not applicable	Foam pad from the shipping container
	5024094	Hex key, 2.5 mm
	5025413	Hex key, 3.0 mm
	5024986	Laser-interlock brackets (2) with machine screws (4)
	17-100-0010	screwdriver, slot-head
	5018636	SoftMax Pro Software with Product Key
	5018965	USB interconnection cable, 0.9 meter (3 foot)
	5025874	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot)

Table 5-1: Cytometer Package Contents for Instrument Installation (continued)

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5018968	AC power interconnection cord, 0.5 meter (1.5 foot)
	1-5590-0010	Evaluation plate
	5022671	SpectraMax i3 Platform Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge

For a complete list of the contents of the package, see the enclosed packing list.

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer and the computer and monitor are shipped in separate packages.

Unpacking the Cytometer

The packaging is specifically designed to protect the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer during transportation.



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.



Note: The shipping box and all packaging materials should be retained in case of future transport needs. Do not use tools that can damage the packaging or the instrument.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 5-2: Required Tool

Part Number	Description
Not applicable	Box cutter

To unpack the cytometer:

1. Check the box for visible damage that occurred during transportation. In case of damage, inform the supplier immediately and keep the damaged packaging.
2. With the box facing up as indicated on the packaging, use a box cutter to carefully cut open the top of the box.
3. Remove the top layer of packaging foam. This piece of foam is used during the installation process.
4. Remove the next layer of packaging foam that holds the tools and accessories.



CAUTION! Keep the instrument upright and level when lifting. Do not tip or shake the instrument to prevent damage to the moving components inside the instrument.

5. With one person on each end, lift the instrument out of the box and gently place the instrument on a dry, flat area of the workbench. For information about the weight of the instrument, see [Physical Specifications on page 189](#).
6. Remove the large plastic bags from the instrument. It might be necessary to slightly lift the instrument to get the bags passed the feet.



Note: The feet are sticky and the instrument does not slide well. It can mark the work surface if slid. To make it easier to move the instrument, place a piece of paper or card under the feet. This must, however, be removed before trying to use the instrument.

Removing the Shipping Protections

To prevent damage during shipping, four (4) purple retaining screws secure the optics plate on the top of the cytometer, and a cover protects the optical components in the optics tower.

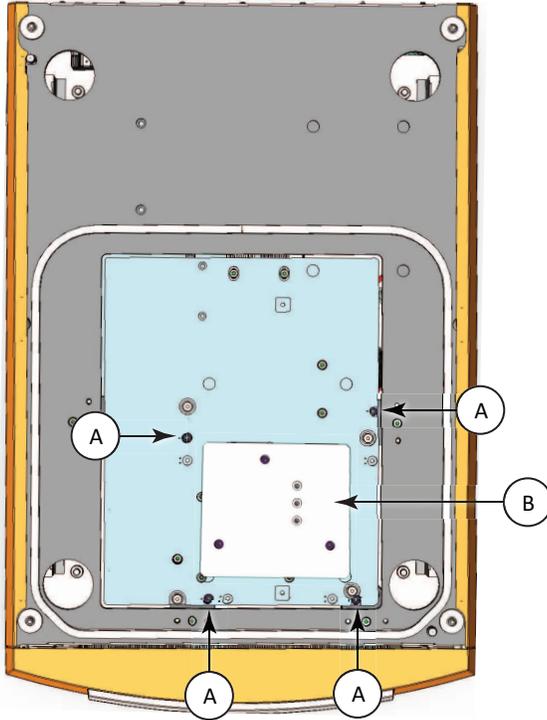


Figure 5-2: Optics Protections for Shipping

Item	Description
A	Optics plate retaining screws (4)
B	Optics cover

CAUTION! Never touch the optic mirrors, lenses, filters, or cables. The optics are extremely delicate, and critical to the function of the instrument.

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 5-3: Required Tool

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5025413	Hex key, 3.0 mm

To remove the shipping protections from the cytometer:

1. Use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove one of the purple retaining screws (A) that secures the optics plate.
2. Press down firmly on the optics plate and use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove the other three purple retaining screws.



CAUTION! Maintain firm downward pressure on the optics plate until all the screws have been removed. When the last screw is removed, the optics plate might "pop" into position.

3. Gently remove pressure from the optics plate to let the springs below the plate extend.
4. Store the optics plate retaining screws in the original shipping container for the cytometer.
5. Use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove the three (3) purple retaining screws (E) that secure the optics cover (B) to the optics tower and then tighten the screws into the three storage holes (F) in the middle of the cover.

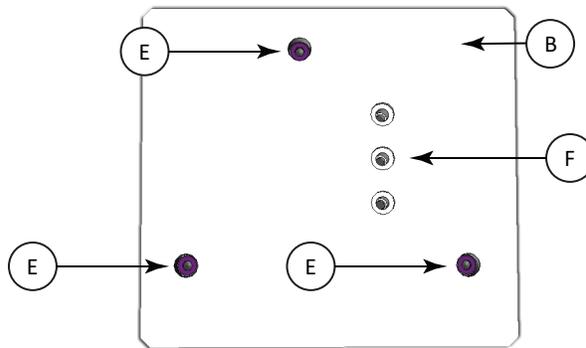


Figure 5-3: Optics Cover

Item	Description
B	Optics cover
E	Optics cover retaining screws (3)
F	Storage holes

6. Lift the cover straight up to remove it from the cytometer.
7. Store the optics cover and hex key in the original shipping container for the cytometer.

Attaching the Imaging Cytometer to the Microplate Reader

Attaching the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer to the SpectraMax i3 Instrument requires a work area that is approximately 130 cm (51.2 in.) wide and 65 cm (25.6 in.) deep, preferably with access on all sides for lifting the instruments.

The required vertical clearance for this procedure is 56 cm (22.0 in.).



CAUTION! If the SpectraMax i3 Instrument has previously been in use, remove all microplates and detection cartridges from the instrument and install the transport locks on the microplate drawer and detection cartridge drawer. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#), [Removing a Detection Cartridge on page 88](#), and [Installing the Transport Locks on page 171](#).



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.

This procedure requires the following tools and accessories:

Table 5-4: Required Tools and Accessories

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	Not applicable	Foam pad from the shipping container
	5024094	Hex key, 2.5 mm
	5024986	Laser-interlock brackets (2) with screws (4)
	17-100-0010	screwdriver, slot-head



Note: All packaging materials, including the optics-access cover and foam block, should be retained in case of future transport needs. Do not use tools that can damage the packaging or the instrument.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

To attach the cytometer to the microplate reader:

1. Place the foam pad from the shipping container on the work bench on one side of the microplate reader.



CAUTION! If the SpectraMax i3 Instrument has previously been in use, remove all microplates and detection cartridges from the instrument and install the transport locks on the microplate drawer and detection cartridge drawer. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#), [Removing a Detection Cartridge on page 88](#), and [Installing the Transport Locks on page 171](#).

2. Use two people to carefully place the microplate reader on its side on top of the foam pad.



WARNING! PINCH HAZARD. There is limited clearance between the side of the microplate reader and the work bench.

3. Use the provided 2.5 mm hex key to remove the four screws (H) that secure the optics-access cover (G) to the bottom of the microplate reader.

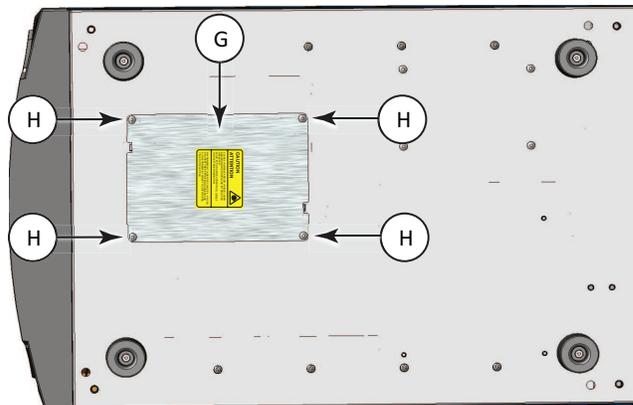


Figure 5-4: Optics Access Cover on the Bottom of the Microplate Reader

Item	Description
G	Optics-access cover
H	Screws (4)

4. Remove the optics-access cover (G) from the microplate reader and store the optics-access cover and screws in the original shipping container for the cytometer.
5. Grasp the foam block in the optics-access opening and then gently pull the foam block out. Store the foam block in the original shipping container for the cytometer.

- Place one of the laser-interlock brackets (I) over the optics-access opening with the interlock tab (J) on the bracket inserted into the corresponding alignment slot (K) on the bottom of the microplate reader.

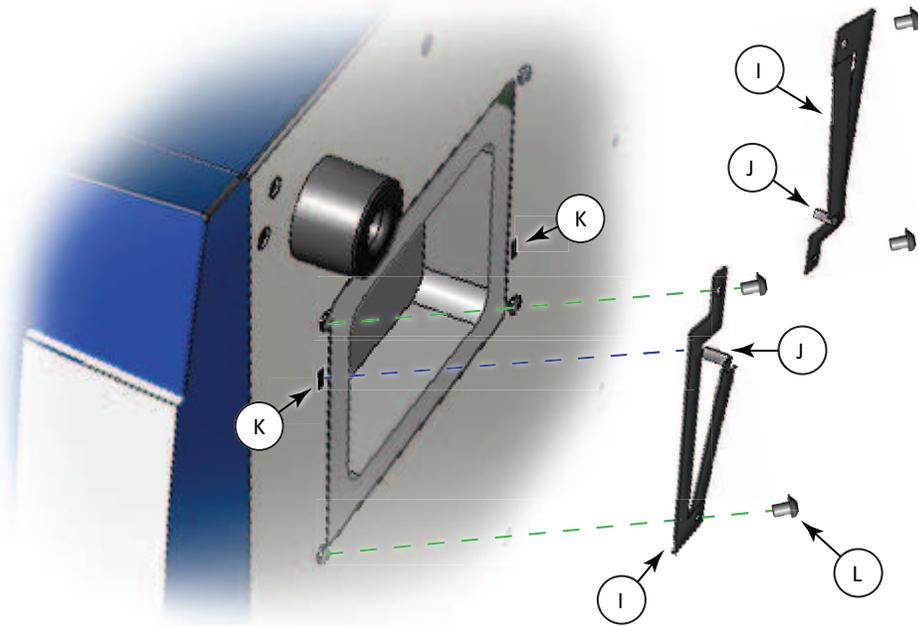


Figure 5-5: Laser-Interlock Brackets

Item	Description
I	Laser-interlock brackets (2)
J	Interlock tabs (2)
K	Alignment slots (2)
L	Screws (4)

- Use the provided 2.5 mm hex key and two of the screws (L) provided with the brackets to secure the laser-interlock bracket (I) to the bottom of the microplate reader.
- Attach the other laser-interlock bracket (L) with the interlock tab (J) inserted into the corresponding alignment slot (K), and then use the other two provided screws (L) to secure the bracket to the bottom of the microplate reader.
- Lightly press on the interlock tabs (J) to make sure that they freely slide in and out of the alignment slots (K).

 **Note:** The laser-interlock brackets are part of the hardware interlock that prevents the laser module from turning on unless the cytometer is installed. For the interlocks to work properly, the interlock tabs must freely slide in and out of the alignment slots.

- Carefully place the cytometer on its side on the foam pad so that the top of the cytometer faces the bottom of the microplate reader.

 **Note:** you might need to slide the microplate reader on the foam pad to make room for the cytometer.

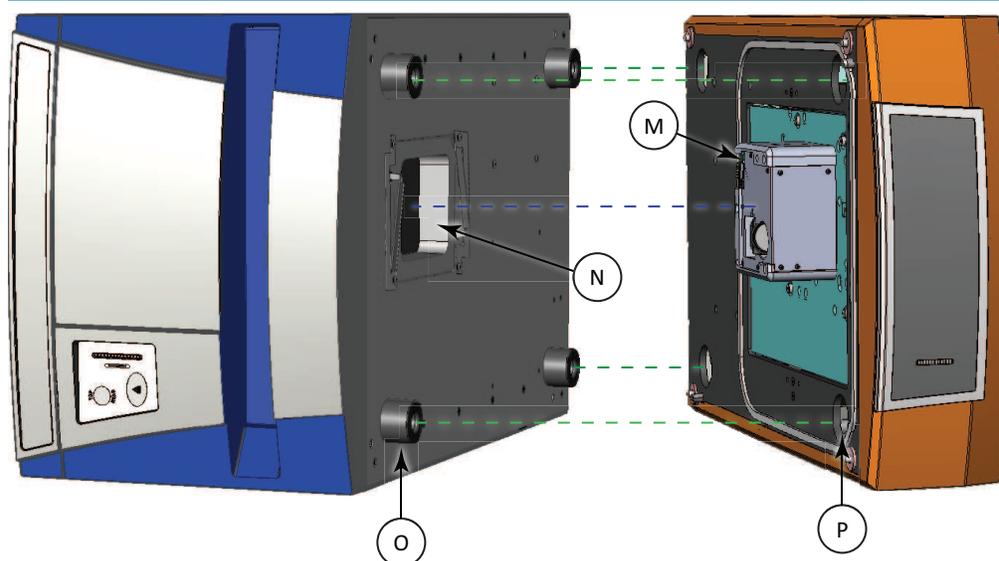


Figure 5-6: Attach the Cytometer to the Microplate Reader

Item	Description
M	Optics tower
N	Optics-access opening
O	Microplate reader feet (4)
P	Microplate reader foot openings (4)



WARNING! PINCH HAZARD. There is limited clearance between the bottom of the microplate reader and the top of the cytometer. The top of the cytometer is beveled to help provide clearance for fingers.

- Slide the cytometer into the microplate reader, making sure that the optics tower (M) fits into the optics-access opening (N) and the four feet (O) on the microplate reader fit into the four foot openings (P) on the cytometer.

12. Use a slot-head screwdriver to tighten one of the four bolts on the bottom of the cytometer.



Note: You might need to use your free hand to push the cytometer into the reader to start the bolt and engage the threads.

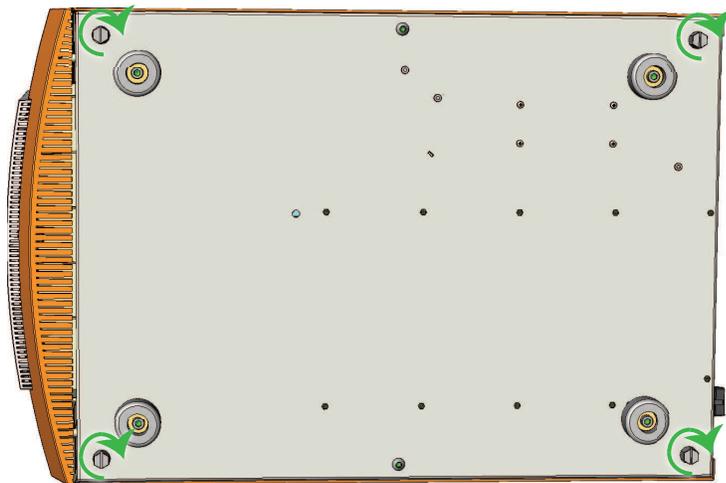


Figure 5-7: Bolts on the Bottom of the Cytometer

13. Attach the other three bolts to secure the cytometer to the microplate reader.
14. Use two people to carefully stand the combined microplate reader and cytometer into an upright position.
15. Store the packing materials, tools, optics-access cover, screws, and foam block in the original shipping container for the cytometer.
16. Remove the transport locks from the SpectraMax i3 Instrument. See [Removing the Transport Locks on page 69](#).

Connecting the Cables

The power cords and USB cables connect to the ports on the rear of the instrument.

Two USB cables connect from the cytometer to the acquisition computer to separately control the instrument and the camera. A USB cable and a power cord connect the microplate reader and the cytometer. A second power cord connects the cytometer to an external power source.

The SpectraMax i3 Instrument requires greater minimum computer system specifications than those required for the SoftMax Pro Software. See [Imaging Cytometer Computer System Specifications on page 188](#).

This procedure requires the following accessories:

Table 5-5: Required Accessories

Illustration	Part Number	Description
	5018636	SoftMax Pro Software with Product Key
	5018965	USB interconnection cable, 0.9 meter (3 foot), provided with the cytometer
	5025874	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot), provided with the cytometer
	VZ 000 014	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot), provided with the microplate reader
	5018968	AC power interconnection cord, 0.5 meter (1.5 foot), provided with the cytometer
	VN 18S S01 or VN 18F F01 01	AC power cord, provided with the microplate reader

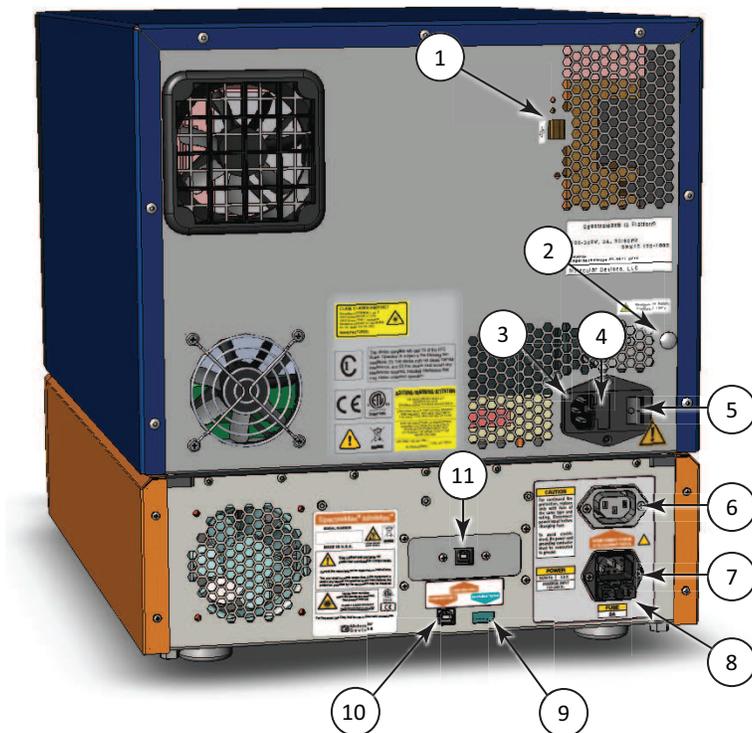


Figure 5-8: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	Microplate reader USB port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Microplate reader power port
4	Microplate reader fuse carrier
5	Power switch
6	Interconnect power port
7	Cytometer power port
8	Cytometer fuse carrier
9	Interconnect USB port
10	Cytometer USB port 1
11	Cytometer USB port 2

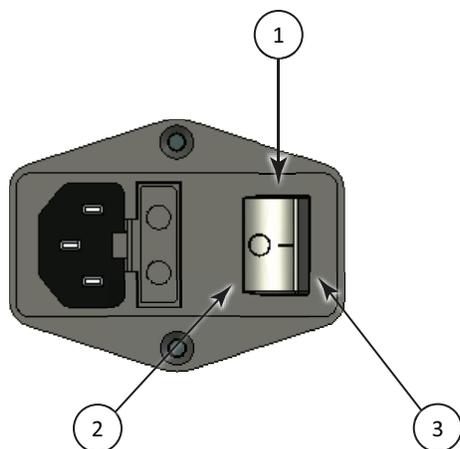


Figure 5-9: Power Switch

Item	Description
1	Power switch
2	Off
3	On

To connect the cytometer cables:

1. Make sure that the instrument and host computer are placed on a dry, flat work area with sufficient space for the two devices and the required cables. To ensure sufficient ventilation and provide access for disconnecting power from the instrument, maintain a 20 cm to 30 cm (7.9 in. to 11.8 in.) gap between the rear of the instrument and the wall.
2. Make sure that the power switch on the rear of the microplate reader is in the Off position. See [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#).
3. Turn on the power to the host computer.
4. Install the SoftMax Pro Software on the computer. See the SoftMax Pro Software installation guide or user guide.

The instrument is supported by SoftMax Pro Software version 6.3 or later. The **SoftMax ProMiniMax Imaging Edition** must be installed to run the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer.

To prevent data loss, turn off all sleep and hibernation settings for the hard disk, the CPU, and the USB ports. Also, disable automatic Windows Updates. You can update Windows manually when the instrument is not being used by the software. See [Required Computer Settings on page 111](#).



Note: Do not start the software until after the cables have been connected and power applied to the instrument. It might be necessary to install USB drivers before starting the software.

- Connect one end of the shorter USB cable (Q) supplied with the cytometer to the interconnect USB port labeled **SpectraMax® System** (R) on the rear of the cytometer, and then connect the other end of the USB cable to the microplate reader USB port (S) on the rear of the microplate reader.

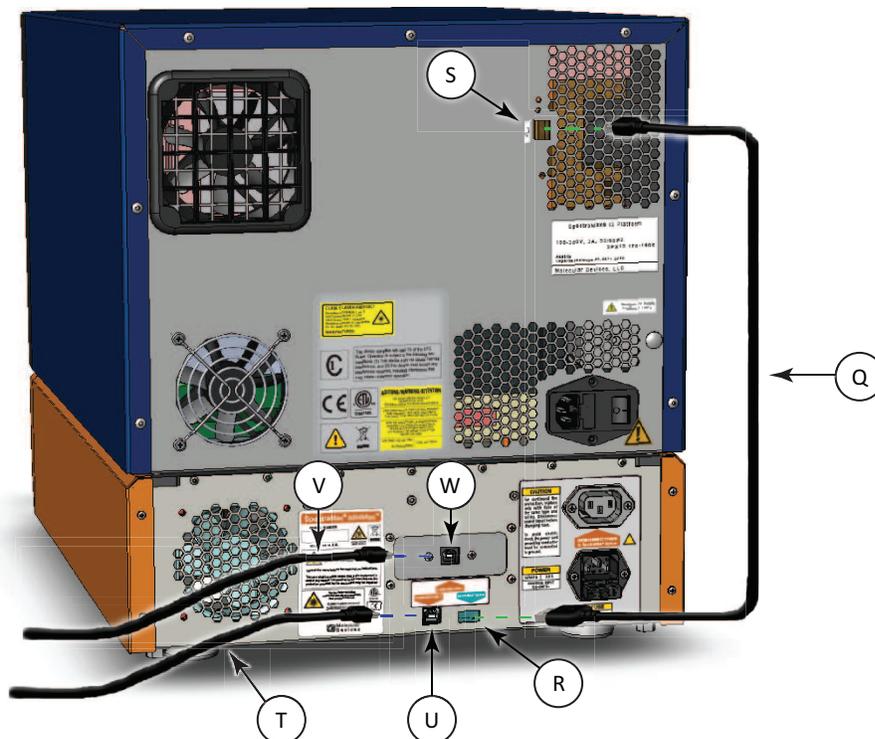


Figure 5-10: USB Cable Connections

Item	Description
Q	USB interconnection cable, 0.9 meter (3 foot), provided with the cytometer
R	Interconnect USB port
S	Microplate reader USB port
T	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot), provided with the cytometer
U	Cytometer USB port 1
V	USB computer connection cable, 3 meter (9.8 foot), provided with the microplate reader
W	Cytometer USB port 2

- Connect one end of the USB cable (T) supplied with the microplate reader to a USB 3.0 port in the PCI card on the rear of the computer, and then connect the other end of the USB cable to the USB port labeled **COMPUTER USB 1** (U) on the rear of the cytometer.

7. Connect one end of the longer USB cable (V) supplied with the cytometer to a USB 3.0 port in the PCI card on the rear of the computer, and then connect the other end of the USB cable to the USB port labeled **COMPUTER USB 2** (W) on the rear of the cytometer.



Note: The USB port labeled **COMPUTER USB 2** is the connection for the camera. It must be connected to a USB 3.0 port in the PCI card on the rear of the computer.



Figure 5-11: USB 3.0 Ports in the PCI Card

8. Connect the short power cord (X) supplied with the cytometer to the microplate reader power port (Y) on the rear of the microplate reader, and then connect the other end of the power cord to the interconnect power port (Z) on the rear of the cytometer. It might be necessary to remove the temporary warning label before connecting the power cord to the microplate reader.

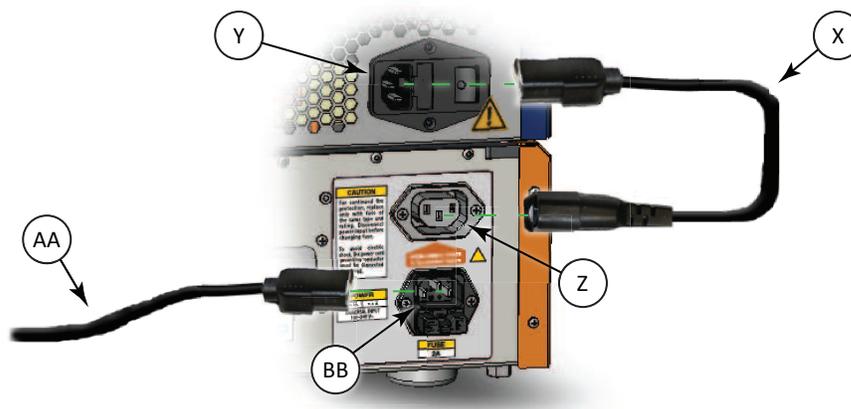


Figure 5-12: Power Ports for Cytometer Connections

Item	Description
X	AC power interconnection cord, 0.5 meter (1.5 foot), provided with the cytometer
Y	Microplate reader power port
Z	Interconnect power port
AA	AC power cord, provided with the microplate reader
BB	Cytometer power port

9. Connect the power cord (AA) supplied with the microplate reader to the cytometer power port (BB) on the rear of the cytometer, and then connect the other end of the power cord to a grounded electrical wall outlet.
10. Set the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the On position and wait for the instrument to complete its initialization routine. See [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#).
11. Start the SoftMax Pro Software. It might be necessary to install USB drivers before starting the software.

Calibrating the Cytometer

When the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer is first installed, the well image needs to be calibrated. This procedure can be done only by trained personnel.



Note: Remove the SpectraMax i3 Instrument transport locks before continuing with this procedure. See [Removing the Transport Locks on page 69](#).

About Whole-Cell Imaging

Whole-cell imaging assays are cell-based, or object-based, rather than the single-point measurements found in other types of microplate reads. These types of assays can yield more biologically meaningful results that can discriminate the fluorescence related to objects, such as cells or beads, from the bulk solution within a microplate well.

The measurement is primarily fluorescent with quantification of cell size, shape, area, and intensity. Label-free quantification is also supported through brightfield, transmitted light imaging. The camera resolution in the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer is sufficient to determine the approximate shape of small 8 micron objects, such as blood cells.

For more information about whole-cell imaging, see [Imaging Read Mode on page 59](#).

Selecting the Light Source for Imaging

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer captures images from the bottom of each microplate well. You can choose to illuminate the sample with white transmitted light from the top of the microplate using the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge, or use fluorescent excitation from the bottom of the microplate.

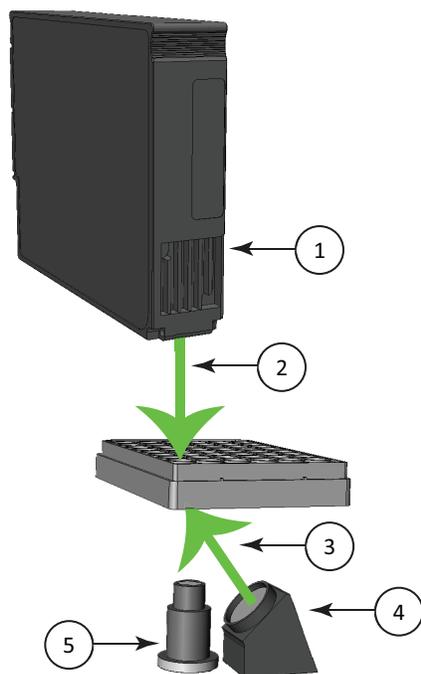


Figure 5-13: Path of Selected Light Sources

Item	Description
1	Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge
2	Path of white light from the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge
3	Path of fluorescent excitation
4	Light source for fluorescent excitation
5	Camera lens

To illuminate the sample from the top, you need to have the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge installed in the detection cartridge drawer. See [Transmitted Light \(TL\) Detection Cartridge](#) on page 115.

For best results with transmitted-light reads, use a microplate with no cover. A clear cover can be used, if required. For fluorescent reads, you can use a solid cover on the microplate. See [Microplate Recommendations](#) on page 114.

Optimizing Your Computer for Image Acquisition

Acquiring images requires a large portion of computer memory and resources. Make sure that your computer meets the requirements in the [Imaging Cytometer Computer System Specifications on page 188](#).

Before starting an image acquisition, you must save the data file in a location with enough capacity for the image files. When you create a data file for an imaging experiment, the SoftMax Pro Software creates a folder with the same name as the data file. See the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

Each acquired image file for an Imaging mode read can be larger than 2 megabytes. Acquiring the image of a single site in each well of a 96-well microplate can generate 300 megabytes of image data. A 384-well microplate can generate 1 gigabyte of image data. Acquiring images of multiple sites increases the data-storage requirement. Molecular Devices recommends that you employ a data management system.

For best results, save your imaging data file on a secondary internal hard drive. You can use an external hard drive, but this can slow the data acquisition and is not recommended.



Note: To prevent data loss, do not save your imaging data file on a USB flash drive or to a network location. These methods are not supported by Molecular Devices.

Before starting an image acquisition, minimize the demands on computer memory and resources by turning off all other programs. When the SoftMax Pro Software has limited access to computer memory and resources, image acquisition can take a long time. In some cases, images of some of the wells can be lost.

To prevent data loss, turn off all sleep and hibernation settings for the hard disk, the CPU, and the USB ports. Also, disable automatic Windows Updates. You can update Windows manually when the instrument is not being used by the software. You can set these options in Windows Control Panel. See [Required Computer Settings on page 111](#).

Molecular Devices recommends that you use Auto Save with imaging data for saving to text files only. If you use Auto Save to save multiple imaging data files, each new data file is saved without the related folders required for saving images and analysis results.

Required Computer Settings

Allowing your computer to hibernate or turn off during data acquisition can interrupt the transfer of data from the instrument to the software and result in data loss.

To prevent data loss, turn off all sleep and hibernation settings for the hard disk, the CPU, and the USB ports. Also, disable automatic Windows Updates. You can update Windows manually when the instrument is not being used by the software.

You can set these options in Windows Control Panel.

1. Open **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Hardware and Sound**.
3. Under **Power Options**, click **Change when the computer sleeps**.
4. Click **Change advanced power settings**.
5. In the **Power Options** dialog, set **Hard disk > Turn off hard disk after** to **Never**.
6. Set **Sleep > Sleep after** to **Never**.
7. Set **Sleep > Hibernate after** to **Never**.
8. Set **USB settings > USB selective suspend setting** to **Disabled**.
9. Click **OK**.
10. Return to the home screen of **Control Panel**.
11. Click **System and Security**.
12. Under **Windows Update**, click **Turn automatic updating on or off**.
13. Under **Important Updates**, make sure that **Install updates automatically** is not selected. Select one of the other options.
14. Click **OK**.
15. Close **Control Panel**.

Using the Imaging Cytometer

Before operating the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer or performing maintenance operations, make sure that you are familiar with the safety information in this guide. See [Safety Information on page 7](#).

For information on controlling the instrument with the software, see the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

The key pad on the front panel of the instrument gives you hardware-based controls for opening and closing the detection cartridge drawer and the microplate drawer. See [Using the Instrument on page 77](#).

The front panel of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer has LED status indicators that provide information about instrument status. See [Cytometer Status LEDs on page 113](#).

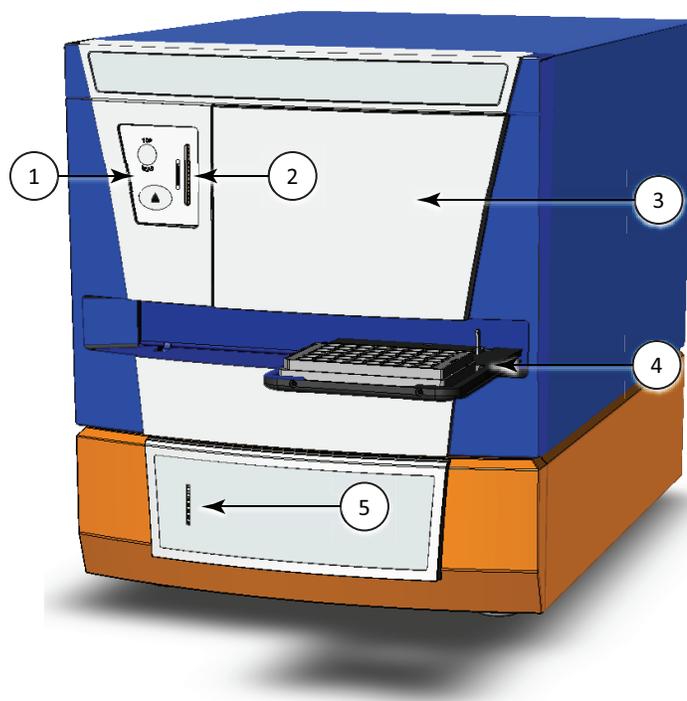


Figure 5-14: The SpectraMax i3 Instrument with the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

Item	Description
1	Key pad
2	Microplate reader status LEDs
3	Detection cartridge drawer
4	Microplate drawer
5	Cytometer status LEDs

The AC power for the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer is shared with the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform. To turn the instrument on or off, press the power switch on the rear of the instrument. See [Turning the Instrument On and Off on page 80](#).

Cytometer Status LEDs

The color and activity of LED status indicators on the front of the cytometer provide information about instrument status.

Table 5-6: Cytometer LED Status Indicators

LED Color and Activity	Instrument Status
Green LED glowing solidly	The cytometer is powered on and is ready to use.
Green LED blinking	The cytometer is powered on and initializing.
Red LED blinking	The cytometer is powered on but is not ready to use. This might indicate an error condition. View the error message in the software.
White LED flashing	The cytometer is imaging a microplate using transmitted light. Each flash indicates an image acquisition.
Blue LED flashing	The cytometer is imaging a microplate using fluorescence excitation. Each flash indicates an image acquisition.

For information about the microplate reader status LEDs, see [Status LEDs on page 79](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

You can use either 96-well or 384-well microplates. Molecular Devices recommends that you use microplates that are designated for imaging.

Table 5-7: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Fluorescent Imaging	Flat bottom, clear bottom, black wall	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.
Transmitted-Light Imaging	Flat bottom, clear bottom	For best results with transmitted-light reads, use a microplate with no cover. A clear cover can be used, if required. When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.



Note: The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer captures images from the bottom of each microplate well. Microplates must have flat-bottom, clear-bottom wells. For optimum results, Molecular Devices recommends using microplates with a bottom thickness of less than 600 μm .

The following clear-bottom, black-wall microplates have been tested for use with the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer.

- 96-well BD Biocoat Collagen (part number: 356649)
- 96-well Costar (part number: 3603)
- 96-well Greiner (part number: 655090)
- 384-well BD Biocoat Collagen (part number: 354667)
- 384-well Costar (part number: 3712)
- 384-well Greiner (part number: 781091)

Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge

To do brightfield, transmitted-light imaging, you must install the SpectraMax i3 Platform Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge in the detection cartridge drawer. The Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge provides white LED illumination for transmitted-light imaging when used with the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer. The StainFree™ Cell Detection Algorithm eliminates cell staining for cell counting and confluency measurements using proprietary transmitted light analysis technology. See [Selecting the Light Source for Imaging on page 109](#).

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

The Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

You can create protocols that use the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 5-8: Measurement Specification for Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge
Short name	TL
Part number	5022671
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Imaging
Type	Transmitted light
Number of slots	1
Light source	Ultra high power LED
Wavelength range	White light, brightfield

Cytometer Maintenance and Troubleshooting

Do only the maintenance described in this guide. Maintenance other than that specified in this guide should be done only by service engineers. See [Obtaining Support on page 181](#).

Before operating the instrument or performing maintenance operations, make sure that you are familiar with the safety information in this guide. See [Safety Information on page 7](#).

The following topics describe maintenance and troubleshooting procedures that can be done by users to ensure optimum operation of the cytometer.

- [Replacing Fuses in the Cytometer on page 116](#)
- [Packing the Cytometer for Storage or Service on page 119](#)

For microplate reader maintenance and troubleshooting procedures, see [Maintenance and Troubleshooting on page 165](#).



WARNING! Service or maintenance procedures other than those specified in this guide can be done only by trained service engineers. When service is required, contact a Molecular Devices service engineer.

Replacing Fuses in the Cytometer

Fuses burn out occasionally and must be replaced.

If the instrument does not seem to be getting power after switching it on, check to see whether the supplied power cord is securely plugged into a functioning power outlet and to the power port at the rear of the instrument. Also, check that the power interconnection cable is securely connected to the microplate reader and to the cytometer.

If the power failed while the instrument was on, check that the power cord is not loose or disconnected and that power to the power outlet is functioning properly.

If these checks fail to remedy the loss of power, replace the fuses. You can obtain replacement fuses from Molecular Devices. For fuse specifications and part numbers, see [Physical Specifications on page 189](#).



CAUTION! Do not touch or loosen screws or parts other than those specifically designated in the instructions. Doing so could cause misalignment and possibly void the warranty.

The fuses are located in the fuse carrier on the rear of the instrument.

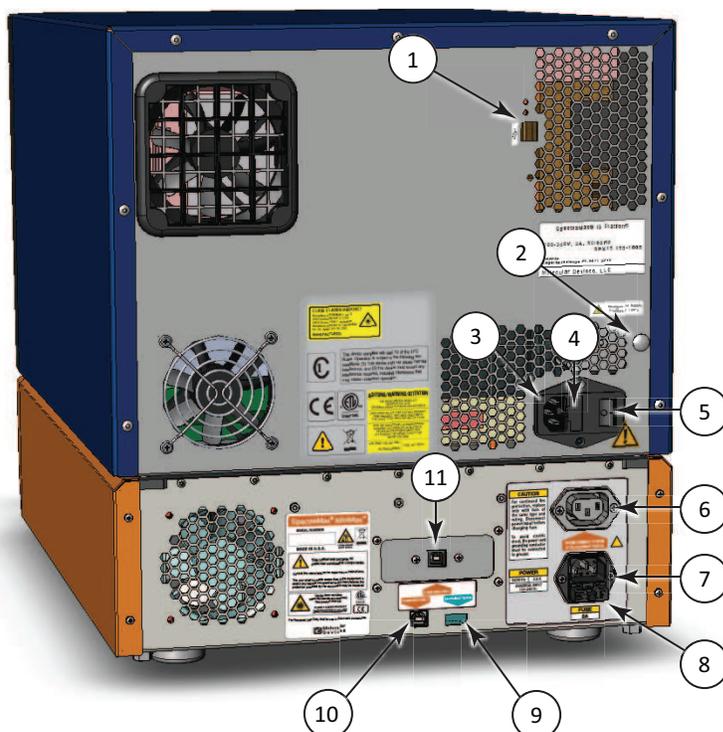


Figure 5-15: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	Microplate reader USB port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Microplate reader power port
4	Microplate reader fuse carrier
5	Power switch
6	Interconnect power port
7	Cytometer power port
8	Cytometer fuse carrier
9	Interconnect USB port
10	Cytometer USB port 1
11	Cytometer USB port 2

The SpectraMax i3 Instrument holds a different pair of fuses in a separate fuse carrier. See [Replacing Fuses on page 168](#).

To replace the fuses in the cytometer:



WARNING! HIGH VOLTAGE Always turn the power switch off and disconnect the power cord from the main power source before performing a maintenance procedure that requires removal of a panel or cover or disassembly of an interior instrument component.

1. Switch the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the off position.
2. Unplug the power cord from the cytometer power port.
3. Gently press on the carrier-release tab and then pull the fuse carrier to remove it from the instrument.

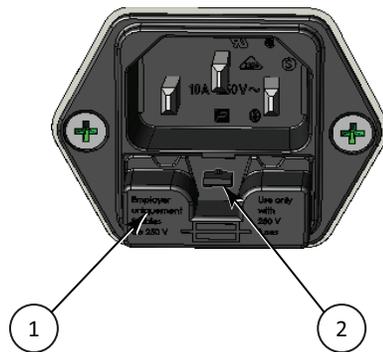


Figure 5-16: Releasing the fuse carrier

Item	Description
1	Fuse carrier
2	Carrier-release tab

4. Gently pull the old fuses from the carrier by hand.
5. Gently place new fuses into the carrier by hand.
6. Replace the fuse carrier.
7. Plug the power cord into the power port.
8. Turn on the power to the instrument.



Note: If the instrument still does not power on after changing the fuses, contact Molecular Devices technical support. See [Obtaining Support on page 181](#).

Packing the Cytometer for Storage or Service

To minimize the possibility of damage during storage or shipment, the cytometer should be repacked only in the original packaging materials. Correctly repacking the instrument includes following applicable decontamination procedures and replacing the red machine screws and the optics-access cover that protect the optical components during shipping.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

The cytometer should be stored in a dry, dust-free, environmentally controlled area. For more information about acceptable storage environments, see [Physical Specifications on page 189](#).

Packing up the cytometer includes the following procedures:

- Disconnect the instrument cables. See [Disconnecting the Cytometer Cables on page 120](#).
- Remove the cytometer from the bottom of the microplate reader. See [Removing the Cytometer from the Microplate Reader on page 122](#).
- Replace the retaining screws and the optics cover that protect the optical components during shipping. See [Attaching the Shipping Protections on page 126](#).

Disconnecting the Cytometer Cables

The power cords and USB cables connect to the ports on the rear of the instrument.

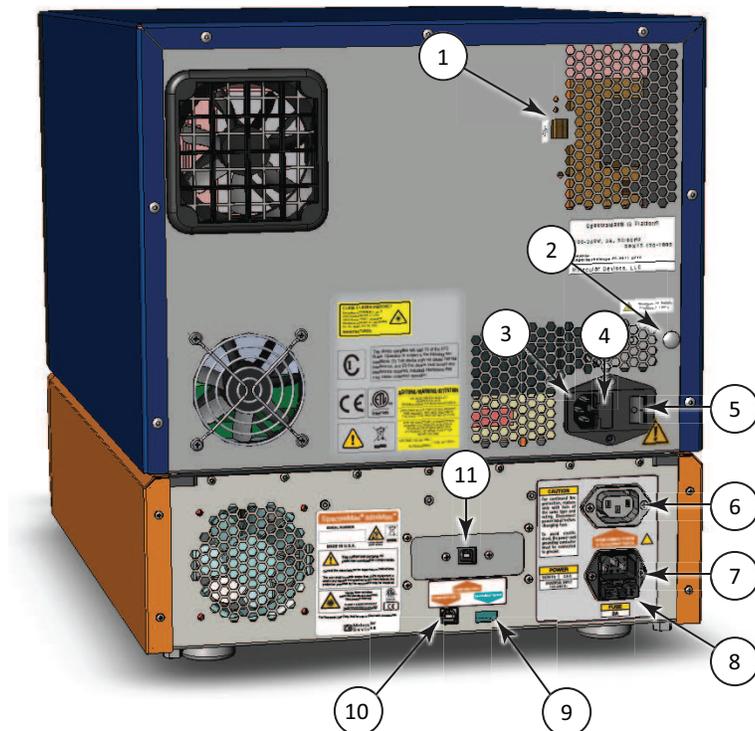


Figure 5-17: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	Microplate reader USB port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Microplate reader power port
4	Microplate reader fuse carrier
5	Power switch
6	Interconnect power port
7	Cytometer power port
8	Cytometer fuse carrier
9	Interconnect USB port
10	Cytometer USB port 1
11	Cytometer USB port 2

To disconnect the cytometer cables:

1. Make sure that the SoftMax Pro Software is not running.
2. Turn off the connected computer.
3. Switch the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the off position.
4. Unplug the power cord from the cytometer power port (7) on the rear of the cytometer, and then unplug the power cord from the grounded electrical wall outlet.
5. Unplug the short power cord from the interconnect power port (6) on the rear of the cytometer, and then unplug the short power cord from the microplate reader power port (3) on the rear of the microplate reader.
6. Disconnect the USB cable from the USB port labeled **COMPUTER USB 2** (11) on the rear of the cytometer, and then disconnect the USB cable from the USB port on the computer.
7. Disconnect the USB cable from the USB port labeled **COMPUTER USB 1** (10) on the rear of the cytometer, and then disconnect the USB cable from the USB port on the computer.
8. Disconnect the short USB cable from the interconnect USB port labeled **SpectraMax® System** (9) on the rear of the cytometer, and then disconnect the USB cable from the microplate reader USB port (1) on the rear of the microplate reader.
9. Store the short power cord, the short USB cable, and one of the longer USB cables in the original shipping container for the cytometer.

The longer power cord and one of the longer USB cables can be reattached to or stored with the microplate reader.

- For information on reattaching these cables to the microplate reader, see [Connecting the Instrument Cables on page 72](#).
- For information on storing these cables with the microplate reader, see [Disconnecting the Instrument Cables on page 175](#).

Removing the Cytometer from the Microplate Reader

Removing the cytometer from the microplate reader requires a work area that is approximately 130 cm (51.2 in.) wide and 65 cm (25.6 in.) deep, preferably with access on all sides for lifting the instruments.

The required vertical clearance for this procedure is 56 cm (22.0 in.).



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.

This procedure requires the following tools and accessories:

Table 5-9: Required Tools and Accessories

Part Number	Item
Not applicable	Foam pad from the shipping container
5024094	Hex key, 2.5 mm
17-100-0010	Screwdriver, slot-head
MK 113 700	Optics-access foam block
MG 115 500	Optics-access cover

To remove the cytometer from the microplate reader:

1. Place a foam pad from the shipping container on the work bench on one side of the instrument.
2. Use two people to carefully place the instrument on its side on top of the foam pad.



WARNING! PINCH HAZARD. There is limited clearance between the side of the microplate reader and the work bench.

3. Use the provided slot-head screwdriver to loosen the four bolts on the bottom of the cytometer.
4. Carefully slide the cytometer away from the microplate reader, being careful not to strike or otherwise damage the optics tower.

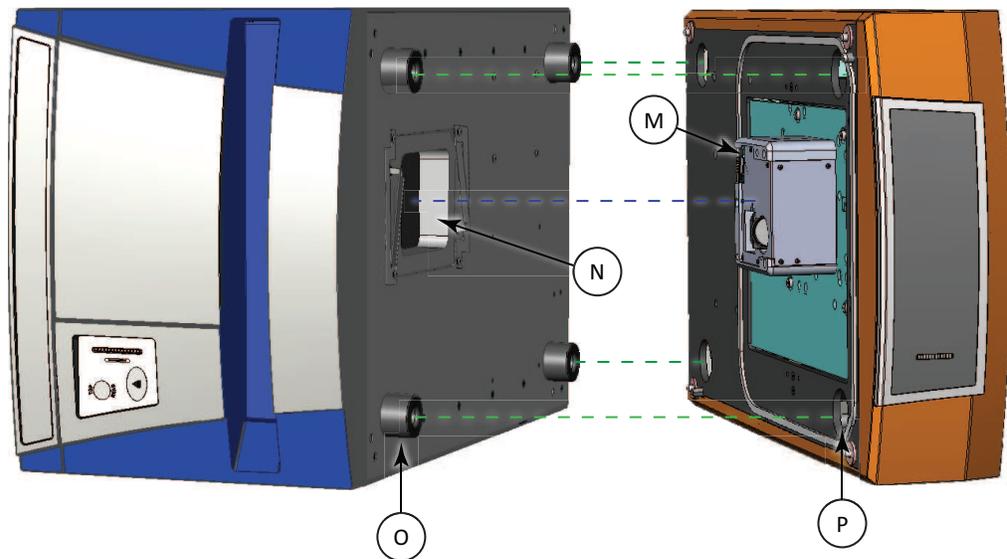


Figure 5-18: Detaching the Cytometer from the Microplate Reader

Item	Description
M	Optics tower
N	Optics access opening
O	Microplate reader feet
P	Microplate reader foot openings

5. Carefully stand the cytometer upright on the workbench.

- Use the provided 2.5 mm hex key to remove the four screws that secure the laser-interlock brackets to the bottom of the microplate reader.

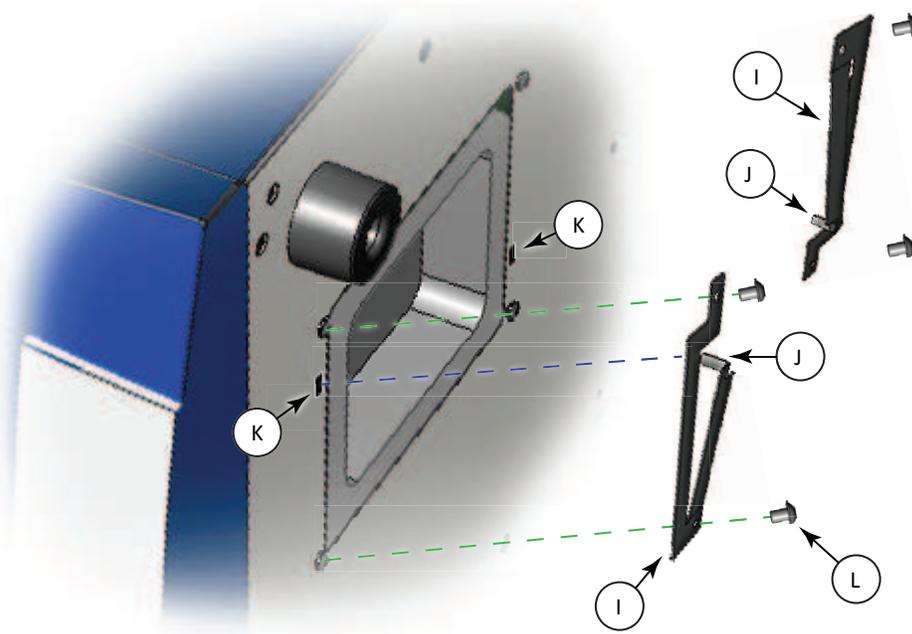


Figure 5-19: Optics-Access Opening Bracket

Item	Description
I	Laser-interlock brackets (2)
J	Interlock tabs (2)
K	Alignment slots (2)
L	Screws (4)

- Remove the laser-interlock brackets from the microplate reader and set the brackets and screws aside.
- Insert the foam block into the optics-access opening.

9. Place the optics-access cover over the optics-access opening with the alignment tabs on the cover inserted into the alignment slots on the bottom of the microplate reader.

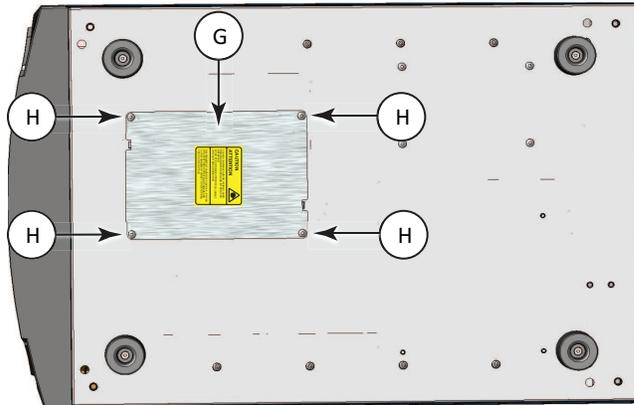


Figure 5-20: Bottom of the Microplate Reader

Item	Description
G	Optics-access cover
H	Screws (4)

10. Use the provided 2.5 mm hex key and the four original screws to secure the optics-access cover to the bottom of the microplate reader.
11. Use two people to carefully stand the microplate reader upright on the workbench.
12. Store the tools and laser-interlock brackets in the original shipping container for the cytometer.



WARNING! LASER LIGHT. The optics-access cover on the bottom of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform has a hardware interlock that prevents the laser module from turning on, unless the cover is in place. The installed cover closes the protective housing.

Attaching the Shipping Protections

To prevent damage during shipping, four (4) purple retaining screws secure the optics plate on the top of the cytometer, and a cover protects the optical components in the optics tower.

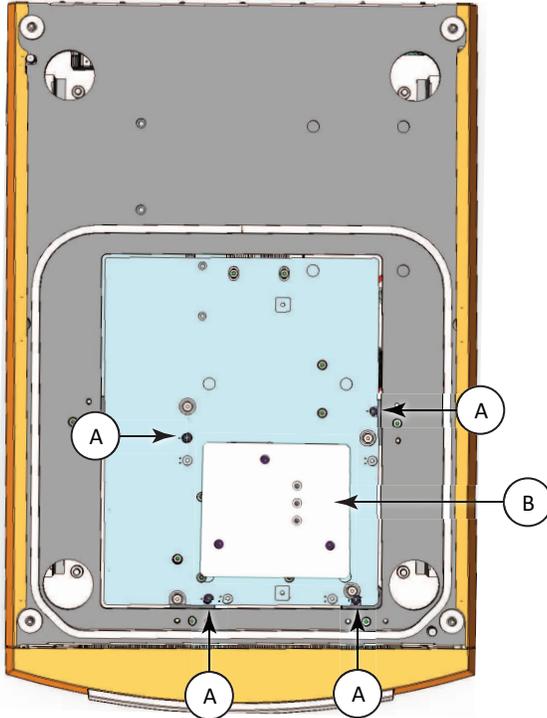


Figure 5-21: Optics Protections for Shipping

Item	Description
A	Optics plate retaining screws (4)
B	Optics cover

CAUTION! Never touch the optic mirrors, lenses, filters, or cables. The optics are extremely delicate, and critical to the function of the instrument.

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 5-10: Required Tool

Part Number	Item
5025258	Hex key, 3.0 mm

To attach the shipping protections to the cytometer:

1. Carefully place the protective cover (B) onto the optics tower (M) with the foam resting on top of the lenses.

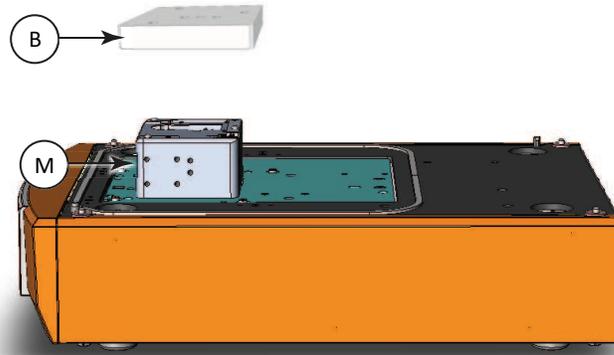


Figure 5-22: Placing the Optics Cover

Item	Description
B	Optics cover
M	Optics tower

2. Use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove the three (3) purple retaining screws from their storage holes (F) in the middle of the optics cover.

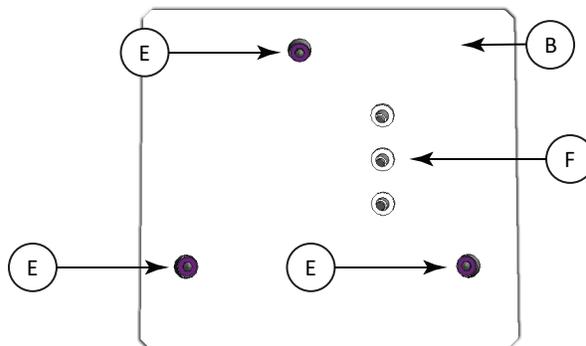


Figure 5-23: Optics Cover (top view)

Item	Description
B	Optics cover
E	Optics cover retaining screws in their transport locations
F	Storage holes

3. Tighten the three (3) purple retaining screws into their transport locations (E) to secure the cover to the optics tower.

- Use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove one of the purple retaining screws (A) from its storage location (D) in the optics plate.

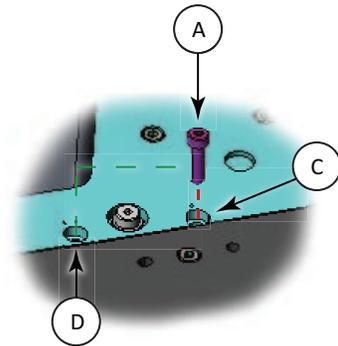


Figure 5-24: Optics Plate Machine Screw

Item	Description
A	Optics plate retaining screw
C	Transport location (indicated by a single inscribed dot)
D	Storage location (indicated by two inscribed dots)

- Insert the purple retaining screw in the adjacent transport location (C) and use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to tighten the screw to secure the optics plate. You might need to press down the optics plate as you tighten the screws.
- Use the provided 3.0 mm hex key to remove the other three purple retaining screws (A) from their storage locations (D) and tighten them in their adjacent transport locations (C) to secure the optics plate.
- Repackage the cytometer and its tools and accessories in the original shipping container for the cytometer.
- Verify that all the tools and accessories are included in the package. See [Contents of the Cytometer Package on page 93](#).

If you are also packing the SpectraMax i3 Instrument, see [Packing the Instrument on page 176](#).

Chapter 6: Available Detection Cartridges

The read capabilities of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument can be upgraded with user-installable detection cartridges. A detection cartridge contains its own independent light source, optics, and electrical components needed to do specific read modes for specific applications.

Application notes with specific application protocol suggestions can be found in the Information Center and the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices web site at www.moleculardevices.com.



Note: For the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the detection cartridges can be used for top reads.

For information about the supported detection cartridges, see the following topics:

- [AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges](#) , see page 130
- [Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge](#) on page 133
- [Time Resolved Fluorescence \(TRF\) Detection Cartridge](#), see page 136
- [Fluorescence Intensity \(FI\) Detection Cartridges](#), see page 139
- [Fluorescence Intensity \(FI\) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge](#), see page 142
- [Fluorescence Polarization \(FP\) Detection Cartridges](#), see page 145
- [Glow Luminescence \(LUM\) Detection Cartridges](#), see page 147
- [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(BRET2\) Detection Cartridge](#), see page 150
- [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(Chroma-Glo\) Detection Cartridge](#), see page 155
- [ScanLater Western Blot \(WB\) Detection Cartridge](#) on page 160

If you are doing brightfield, transmitted-light imaging, with the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, see [Transmitted Light \(TL\) Detection Cartridge](#) on page 115.

AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges

The AlphaScreen® Detection Cartridges use a 680 nm laser diode to provide a sensitive reading system for AlphaScreen assays. Also, a patent-pending design that isolates each well enables the optimal performance for AlphaScreen assays. The detection cartridges also capture the Europium emission line of AlphaLISA®.

The following AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges are available:

- AlphaScreen 384 Std Detection Cartridge
- AlphaScreen 384 HTS Detection Cartridge
- AlphaScreen 1536 HTS Detection Cartridge

Each AlphaScreen Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer. For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

ALPHASCREEN and ALPHALISA are registered trademarks of PerkinElmer, Inc.

About AlphaScreen

ALPHA stands for Amplified Luminescent Proximity Homogeneous Assay. AlphaScreen is a bead-based chemistry used to study molecular interactions between moieties A and B, for example. When a biological interaction between A and B moves beads—coated with A and B, respectively—together, a cascade of chemical reactions produce a greatly amplified signal.

An AlphaScreen measurement includes a light pulse, by turning on the laser diode for a specified time, turning off the laser diode, followed by the measurement of the AlphaScreen signal, as specified in the protocol parameters.

Table 6-1: AlphaScreen Timing Parameters

Parameter	Value	Comment
Excitation time	40 ms	The period when the sample is exposed to the laser.
Integration time	80 ms	The period when the signal is read from the sample.

For more information about AlphaScreen, see [AlphaScreen Read Mode on page 53](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-2: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the AlphaScreen Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
AlphaScreen (ALPHA)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. White plates are recommended for reading AlphaScreen (such as, Optiplate-384 white opaque, Perkin Elmer #6007290). Black plates absorb light and lead to reduced signals.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges are shown in the following table.

Table 6-3: Measurement Specifications for AlphaScreen Detection Cartridges

Item	Description	Description	Description
Detection cartridge name	AlphaScreen 384 Std Detection Cartridge	AlphaScreen 384 HTS Detection Cartridge	AlphaScreen 1536 HTS Detection Cartridge
Short name	ALPHA 384 Std	ALPHA 384 HTS	ALPHA 1536 HTS
Part number	0200-7017	0200-7018	0200-7019
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Microplate formats	Compatible with 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, and 384-well microplates.	Compatible with 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, and 384-well microplates.	Compatible with 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 384, 1536-well microplates.
Read Mode	AlphaScreen	AlphaScreen	AlphaScreen
Type	Single emission	Single emission	Single emission
Number of slots	1 slot	1	1
Light source	Laser diode (1 watt)	Laser diode (1 watt)	Laser diode (1 watt)
Filter Set	EX: 680 EM: 570-100	EX: 680 EM: 570-100	EX: 680 EM: 570-100
Labels	AlphaScreen reagents and assay kits	AlphaScreen reagents and assay kits	AlphaScreen and AlphaLISA reagents and assay kits
Detection limit*	384-well (2 µl) <100 amol/well	384-well (25 µl) <100 amol/well	NA

*AlphaScreen detection limit <100 amol of biotinylated-LCK-P peptide, 25 µL/well in 384-well plate. AlphaScreen detection limit of biotinylated-LCK-P peptide was determined with 3 x SD over background method using AlphaScreen Phosphotyrosine (PT66) Assay Kit (Cat. No. 6760602C). Serial dilutions were made into assay buffer by diluting 10 nMβ-LCK-P reaction mix containing Acceptor and Donor beads. Measurement was done after a 1 hour incubation.

Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge

The Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge uses a high-energy Xenon flash lamp for sensitive reading of HTRF reagents. Also, the standard dual-emission design gives the most accurate results in short overall read time. This detection cartridge enables time-resolved fluorescence read modes for europium cryptate and europium acceptors.

The fluorescence ratio related to the HTRF readout is a correction method developed by Cisbio and covered by the US patent 5,527,684 and its foreign equivalents, for which Cisbio has granted a license to Molecular Devices. Its application is strictly limited to the use of HTRF reagents and technology, excluding other TR-FRET technologies such as IMAP TR-FRET calculations of acceptor to donor ratios.

The Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge is a dual-emission detection cartridge and occupies two (2) slots in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridges can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridges in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

HTRF is a registered trademark of Cisbio Bioassays.

About Homogeneous Time-Resolved Fluorescence

Homogeneous Time-Resolved Fluorescence (HTRF) is a measurement technique based on fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) using the advantages of time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) reading.

The Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge uses a Xenon flash lamp. The excitation filter selects wavelengths suitable for the excitation of Europium cryptates below 330 nm. Emission filters detect signal for Europium cryptate (616 nm) and typical Europium acceptor labels (665 nm).

The Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge provides the optimal performance for key applications for drug discovery, bioprocess development, and others.

- GPCR Assays
- Cytokine Assays
- cAMP Quantitation
- Human mAb Screening
- Kinase Assays

For more information, see [HTRF Read Mode on page 44](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-4: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Time-Resolved Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (TR-FRET)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-5: Measurement Specification for Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Cisbio HTRF Detection Cartridge
Short name	HTRF
Part number	0200-7011
Weight	2.6 lbs (1.2 kg)
Read mode	Time-Resolved Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (TR-FRET)
Type	Dual emission
Number of slots	2 slots
Light source	Xenon Flash Lamp
Filter set	EX: HTRF EM1: 616-10 EM2: 665-10
Labels	Europium cryptate, Europium acceptors
Applications	HTRF certified by Cisbio Bioassays

Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge

The Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge enables time-resolved fluorescence read modes for Europium and Samarium. It is ideal for protein interaction, GPCR, and enzyme activity applications.

The Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

Well scan is not available for dual-label assays.

You can create protocols that use the Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

About Time-Resolved Fluorescence

Time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) is a measurement technique that depends on three characteristics that lead to better discrimination between the specific signal, proportional to the quantity of label, and the unspecific fluorescence resulting from background and compound interference:

- Pulsed excitation light sources
- Time-gated electronics faster than the fluorescence lifetime
- Labels with prolonged fluorescence lifetime

The time-gating electronics introduce a delay between the cut off of each light pulse and the start of signal collection. During the delay, the unspecific fluorescence (caused by test compounds, assay reagents, and the microplate) vanishes while only a small portion of the specific fluorescence from the label is sacrificed. Enough of the specific signal remains during the decay period with the added benefit of reduced background.

The Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge uses an ultraviolet LED that emits in the range between 350 nm and 380 nm for excitation of Europium chelates, and comes equipped with emission filters for europium and samarium. This enables single-label europium and samarium assays as well as dual-label assays involving europium and samarium to be run. See [Measurement Specifications on page 138](#).



Note: Europium cryptate and terbium require excitation wavelengths below 330 nm and cannot be measured with this detection cartridge.

For more information about time-resolved fluorescence, see [Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode on page 39](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-6: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Time-Resolved Fluorescence (TRF)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-7: Measurement Specification for Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Detection Cartridge
Short name	TRF-EUSA
Part number	0200-0723
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Time-Resolved Fluorescence (TRF) Time-Resolved Fluorescence, Dual-Label (TRF-Dual)
Type	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot
Light source	Ultra high power LED
Filter set	EX: 370-80 EM1: 616-10 EM2: 642-10
Labels	Europium chelate, Samarium chelate
Detection limit	384-well plate (75 μ L): 5 amol 1536-well plate (8 μ L): 1.5 amol
Linear dynamic range	6 logs in a single microplate read

Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges use an ultra high power LED for the excitation of various fluorescent labels, enabling fluorescence intensity read modes. Also, the standard dual-emission design enables simple, straightforward fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) measurement.

The following Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges are available:

- Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (coum-fluor) Detection Cartridge
- Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (fluor-rhod) Detection Cartridge
- Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (Cy3-Cy5) Detection Cartridge
- Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (CFP-YFP) Detection Cartridge

Other Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges include the [Fluorescence Intensity \(FI\) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge on page 142](#).

Each Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

About Fluorescence Intensity

In fluorescence intensity read mode, the source light is directed through a tunable excitation filter and then focused by an objective lens from above the microplate. The filter passes only the specified wavelength band necessary to excite samples. The objective lens collects the resulting fluorescence and directs it through an emission filter to separate background light from the specific wavelengths generated by samples. This signal is detected by a photo multiplier tube.

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges use an ultra high power LED and an optimized filter set together with the photon counting detection capabilities of the instrument, resulting in superior detection limits and linear dynamic range at short read times. See [Measurement Specifications on page 140](#).

For more information about fluorescence intensity, see [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-8: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Fluorescence Intensity (FL)	Solid black	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges are shown in the following table.

Table 6-9: Measurement Specifications for Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges

Item	Description	Description	Description	Description
Detection cartridge name	Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (coum-fluor) Detection Cartridge	Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (fluor-rhod) Detection Cartridge	Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (Cy3-Cy5) Detection Cartridge	Fluorescence Intensity (FI) (CFP-YFP) Detection Cartridge
Short name	FI-COFL	FI-FLRH	FI-CY3CY5	FI-CFP-YFP
Part number	0200-7002	0200-7003	0200-7004	0200-7005
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)

Table 6-9: Measurement Specifications for Fluorescence Intensity (FI) Detection Cartridges (continued)

Item	Description	Description	Description	Description
Read Mode	Fluorescence Intensity (FL) Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET)	Fluorescence Intensity (FL) Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET)	Fluorescence Intensity (FL) Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET)	Fluorescence Intensity (FL) Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET)
Type	Dual emission	Dual emission	Dual emission	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot	1 slot	1 slot	1 slot
Light source	Ultra high power LED	Ultra high power LED	Ultra high power LED	Ultra high power LED
Filter Set	EX: 360-35 EM1: 465-35 EM2: 535-25	EX: 485-20 EM1: 535-25 EM2: 595-35	EX: 535-25 EM1: 595-35 EM2: LP655	EX: 445-20 EM1: 485-20 EM2: 535-25
Labels	FL: Coumarin FRET: Coumarin-Fluorescein	FL: Fluorescein FRET: Fluorescein-Rhodamine	FL: Rhodamine FRET: CY3-CY5	FL: AlexaFluor 430, Thioflavin FRET: CFP-YFP
Detection limit	384-well plate (75 μ L): 10 fmol/well 1536-well plate (8 μ L): 3 fmol/well	384-well plate (75 μ L): 0.10 fmol/well 1536-well plate (8 μ L): 0.03 fmol/well	384-well plate (75 μ L): 0.15 fmol/well 1536-well plate (8 μ L): 0.06 fmol/well	384-well plate (75 μ L): 5 fmol/well 1536-well plate (8 μ L): 5 fmol/well
Linear dynamic range	4 logs in a single microplate read	6 logs in a single microplate read	6 logs in a single microplate read	5 logs in a single microplate read

*Other labels compatible with the excitation and emission wavelengths of the cartridge can also be used. All trademarks are the property of their respective owner.

Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge is designed for use with GeneBLAzer assays from Invitrogen. Also, the standard dual-emission design enables simple, straightforward fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) measurement.

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

About Fluorescence Intensity and GeneBLAzer

In fluorescence intensity read mode, the source light is directed through a tunable excitation filter and then focused by an objective lens from above the microplate. The filter passes only the specified wavelength band necessary to excite samples. The objective lens collects the resulting fluorescence and directs it through an emission filter to separate background light from the specific wavelengths generated by samples. This signal is detected by a photomultiplier tube.

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge includes an ultra high-power LED for excitation of the FRET donor moiety of the substrate.

The Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge is designed for use with GeneBLAzer assays from Invitrogen. The GeneBLAzer technology facilitates fluorescent detection of β -lactamase reporter activity in mammalian cells by using the reporter gene, *bla* (M), and a fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET)-based substrate (CCF2). See [Measurement Specifications on page 144](#).

The GeneBLAzer technology provides a sensitive method to quantitate gene expression in mammalian cells. GeneBLAzer Detection Kits enable *in vivo* (living cells) or *in vitro* (cell lysates) detection of β -lactamase reporter activity using a special fluorescent substrate. The GeneBLAzer assay system consists of two major components:

- The β -lactamase reporter gene, *bla*(M), a modified form of the *E. coli bla* gene. When fused to promoter sequences or to a gene of interest (in the context of a vector), the *bla* (M) gene can be used as a reporter of promoter activity or gene expression in mammalian cells, respectively.
- CCF2, a FRET-based substrate permitting fluorescent detection of β -lactamase reporter activity. CCF2 consists of a core (enzyme substrate site) linked to two fluorophores, 7-hydroxycoumarin and fluorescein. If there is no *bla* expression, then the substrate molecule remains intact. In this state, excitation of the coumarin results in fluorescence resonance energy transfer to the fluorescein moiety and emission of green light. However, in the presence of *bla* expression, the substrate is cleaved, separating the fluorophores, and disrupting energy transfer. Excitation of the coumarin in the presence of β -lactamase activity results in a blue fluorescence signal. The resulting blue:green ratio provides a normalized reporter response.

For GeneBLAzer data, refer to the *Invitrogen GeneBLAzer Detection Kits Instruction Manual, 25-0661*. Background fluorescence should be determined using sample wells containing medium plus serum without cells.

The ratio of blue and green fluorescence signal is calculated by dividing the 465 nm emission (blue channel) reading by the 535 nm emission (green channel) reading:

$$\text{Ratio} = \frac{(\text{signal at 465 nm} - \text{background at 465 nm})}{(\text{signal at 535 nm} - \text{background at 535 nm})}$$

The ratio obtained from the experimental sample is compared to the ratio obtained from the applicable negative controls.

For more information about fluorescence intensity, see [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-10: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Fluorescence Intensity (FL)	Solid black	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-11: Measurement Specification for Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Fluorescence Intensity (FI) GeneBLAzer Detection Cartridge
Short name	G-BLAZER
Part number	0200-7006
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Fluorescence Intensity (FL) Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET)
Type	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot
Light source	Ultra high power LED
Filter set	EX: 406-15 EM1:465-35 EM2: 535-25
Labels	FL: 7-hydroxycoumarin FRET: Coumarin-Fluorescein, CCF2 GeneBLAzer substrate Other labels compatible with the excitation and emission wavelengths of the cartridge can also be used.
Application	Designed for use with Invitrogen GeneBLAzer reagents

Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges

The Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges enable fluorescence polarization read modes for specific labels, depending on the cartridge.

Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges are available for the following labels:

- Fluorescence Polarization (FP) (Fluorescein) Detection Cartridge
- Fluorescence Polarization (FP) (Rhodamine) Detection Cartridge

Each Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).

You can create protocols that use the Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

About Fluorescence Polarization

Fluorescence polarization (FP) mode measures the relative change of polarization of emitted fluorescent compared to excitation light.

Fluorescence polarization detection is similar to fluorescence intensity, with the important difference that it uses plane-polarized light, rather than non-polarized light. Plate readers measure FP of the sample by detecting light emitted both parallel and perpendicular to the plane of excitation.

By using a fluorescent dye to label a small molecule, its binding to a different molecule of equal or greater size can be monitored through its speed of rotation.

When molecules are excited with polarized light, the polarization of the emitted light depends on the size of the molecule to which the fluorophore is bound. Larger molecules emit a higher percentage of polarized light, while smaller molecules emit a lower percentage of polarized light because of their rapid molecular movement. For this reason FP is generally used for molecular binding assays in high-throughput screening (HTS).

For more information on fluorescence polarization, see [Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode on page 48](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-12: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Fluorescence Polarization (FP)	Solid black	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using unidded plate for fluorescence polarization measurements.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges are shown in the following table.

Table 6-13: Measurement Specifications for Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges

Item	Description	Description
Detection cartridge name	Fluorescence Polarization (FP) (Fluorescein) Detection Cartridge	Fluorescence Polarization (FP) (Rhodamine) Detection Cartridge
Short name	FP-FLUO	FP-RHOD
Part number	0200-7009	0200-0710
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read Mode	Fluorescence polarization (FP)	Fluorescence polarization (FP)
Type	Dual emission	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot	1 slot
Light source	Ultra high power LED	Ultra high power LED
Filter Set	EXP: 485-20 EMP1: 535-25 EMP2: 535-25	EXP: 535-25 EMP1: 595-35 EMP2: 595-35
Labels	Fluorescein 1 nM Other labels compatible with the excitation and emission wavelengths of the cartridge can also be used.	Rhodamine 4 nM Other labels compatible with the excitation and emission wavelengths of the cartridge can also be used.

Table 6-13: Measurement Specifications for Fluorescence Polarization (FP) Detection Cartridges (continued)

Item	Description	Description
Detection	384-well (75 μ l): 3 mP	384-well (75 μ l): 4 mP
limit ¹	1536-well (8 μ l): 6 mP	1536-well (8 μ l): 6 mP

¹ Replicate standard deviation at the label concentration specified under Labels.

Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges

The Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges enable luminescence read modes.

The three Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges are individually optimized for 1536-well, 384-well, or 96-well microplate formats:

- Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge
- Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge (384)
- Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge (96)

For dual-color luminescence, see the [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(BRET2\) Detection Cartridge on page 150](#) and the [Dual Color Luminescence \(LUM\) \(Chroma-Glo\) Detection Cartridge on page 155](#).

Each Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

About Luminescence

Luminescence is the emission of light by processes that derive energy from essentially non-thermal changes, the motion of subatomic particles, or the excitation of an atomic system by radiation. Luminescence detection relies on the production of light from a chemical reaction in a sample.

Each Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge contains the components for measuring the light intensity from luminescence. Since the light is emitted as a result of a chemical reaction, no excitation light and no excitation filters are required to measure luminescence. The luminescence can be measured with no emission filters, or an emission wavelength selected from within the specified range. See [Measurement Specifications on page 149](#).



Note: This detection cartridge is not suitable for measurement of flash luminescence reactions, which require injectors.

For more information about luminescence, see [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-14: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Luminescence (LUM)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using an unlidged plate for luminescence measurements.



Note: White microplates provide significantly higher signal than black microplates, and are recommended if high sensitivity is required. White microplates can, however, exhibit some detectable phosphorescence which increases background after being exposed to light (in particular under neon lights). For maximum sensitivity, Molecular Devices recommends to prepare microplates under reduced ambient light conditions, and to adapt the microplates to dark for 10 to 30 minutes before measurement.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges are shown in the following table.

Table 6-15: Measurement Specifications for Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridges

Item	Description	Description	Description
Detection cartridge name	Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge	Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge (384)	Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge (96)
Short name	LUM	LUM 384	LUM 96
Part number	0200-7012	0200-7015	0200-7014
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Microplate formats	6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 384, 1536-well microplates	6, 12, 24, 48, 96, and 384-well microplates	6, 12, 24, 48, 96-well microplates
Read mode	Luminescence (LUM)	Luminescence (LUM)	Luminescence (LUM)
Type	Single emission	Single emission	Single emission
Number of slots	1 slot	1 slot	1 slot
Light source	None	None	None
Wavelength range	Visible to 650 nm	Visible to 650 nm	Visible to 650 nm
Labels/Substrates	Labels compatible with the wavelength range	Labels compatible with the wavelength range	Labels compatible with the wavelength range
Detection limit (ATP)	96-well (200 μL) Guaranteed: 25 pM Optimized: 15 pM 384-well (50 μL) Guaranteed: 100 pM Optimized: 40 pM 1536-well (8 μL) Guaranteed: 250 pM Optimized: 190 pM	96-well (200 μL) Guaranteed: 20 pM Optimized: 12 pM 384-well (50 μL) Guaranteed: 40 pM Optimized: 20 pM 1536-well (8 μL) NA	96-well (200 μL) Guaranteed: 15 pM Optimized: 10 pM 384-well (50 μL) NA 1536-well (8 μL) NA
Linear dynamic range	5 logs in a single microplate read	5 logs in a single microplate read	5 logs in a single microplate read

Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge enables read modes for luminescence and is designed to provide the optimal performance when used with PerkinElmer BRET² reagents.

For luminescence measurements that do not require emission filters, see [Glow Luminescence \(LUM\) Detection Cartridges on page 147](#).

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

BRET² is a trademark of PerkinElmer, Inc.

About BRET Luminescence

Bioluminescence Resonance Energy Transfer (BRET) is a measurement technique sharing the key feature of fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) while using the advantages of luminescence reading.

BRET employs a luminescence substrate that can undergo cleavage due to an enzymatic group (donor label) resulting in luminescence emission (channel 1). Unlike other generic luminescence assays, the BRET luminescence can be quenched by a radiationless Energy Transfer to an acceptor label (a fluorophore) resulting in fluorescence emission at a longer wavelength (red shifted, channel 2). The acceptor must be chosen such that its excitation spectrum overlaps the emission spectrum of the luminescence (Resonance condition). In the presence of substrate the energy transfer can occur only when the enzymatic group and the acceptor are in close proximity. Because of this fact, when labels are applied to study protein-protein interactions for example, signal measured at the emission wavelength of the acceptor fluorophore indicates binding.

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET²) Detection Cartridge contains the components for measuring the light intensity from BRET² reagents. Since the light is emitted as a result of a chemical reaction, no excitation light and no excitation filters are required to measure luminescence, and the detection of the acceptor fluorophore (channel 2) can be regarded as a luminescence also. Emission filters differentiate emissions from the luminescence and the acceptor fluorophore. So, a dual color luminescence read mode is applied.

BRET² can be used to study various kinds of protein-protein interactions. It employs a luciferase label (where "label" generally means fused by the use of expression vectors) for the one protein and a Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) variant label for the other. The type of luciferase (Renilla) metabolizes the luminescent substrate (a coelenterazine derivative) resulting in blue luminescence (emission filter 1). Given the substrate, when the other protein with the GFP label is in close proximity to the luciferase, it quenches the blue luminescence and emits a green luminescence (emission filter 2). A high green to blue ratio indicates binding. The energy transfer is possible by the selection of the labels, that is, the overlap of the blue luminescence spectrum with the excitation spectrum of the GFP (resonance condition). As a result, BRET² combines the advantage of being a homogeneous (no washing steps required) assay with the generic sensitivity of luminescence detection.

Energy Transfer data are generally normalized by taking the red shifted emission and dividing it by the blue shifted emission. In terms of the BRET² reagents, the normalization of the green signal with the blue signal mainly compensates for the decay of the signal due to the digestion of the substrate. The software supports data reduction in taking ratios of the two emission channels.

Because of the signal decay, measure the assay immediately after adding the luminescence substrate. The spectral separation of the green from the blue signal conveniently eliminates the need for preprocessing the raw data.

When doing a binding assay, controls are involved that represent a maximum (high) and a minimum (low) G:B (green to blue) ratio, and the Z' parameter can be applied. More than merely taking the ratio of high and low G:B values, the Z' includes replicate variability to validate the actual data quality.

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{|Mean_{c+} - Mean_{c-}|}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.

The BRET² reagents can be applied in various ways to study other types of molecular interactions in cell based assays. For a list of applications, go to www.perkinelmer.com.

For more information on luminescence, see [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#).

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-16: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Luminescence (LUM)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using an unlidged plate for luminescence measurements.
Luminescence, Dual Color (LUM-Dual)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using an unlidged plate for luminescence measurements.



Note: White microplates provide significantly higher signal than black microplates, and are recommended if high sensitivity is required. White microplates can, however, exhibit some detectable phosphorescence which increases background after being exposed to light (in particular under neon lights). For maximum sensitivity, Molecular Devices recommends to prepare microplates under reduced ambient light conditions, and to adapt the microplates to dark for 10 to 30 minutes before measurement.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-17: Measurement Specification for Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (BRET2) Detection Cartridge
Short name	LUM-BRET2
Part number	0200-7016
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Luminescence (LUM) Luminescence, Dual Color (LUM-Dual)
Type	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot
Light source	None
Wavelength range	EM1: 410-80 EM2: 515-30
Labels	Labels compatible with the wavelength range
Application	Designed for use with PerkinElmer BRET ² reagents

Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge enables read modes for luminescence and is designed to provide the optimal performance when used with Promega Chroma-Glo™ reagents.

For luminescence measurements that do not require emission filters, see [Glow Luminescence \(LUM\) Detection Cartridges on page 147](#).

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge occupies one (1) slot in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

The can do the following read types:

- End Point, see [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).
- Kinetic, see [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).
- Well Scan, see [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#).

You can create protocols that use the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

Chroma-Glo is a trademark of Promega Corporation.

About Dual Color Luminescence

Luminescence is the emission of light by processes that derive energy from essentially non-thermal changes, the motion of subatomic particles, or the excitation of an atomic system by radiation. Luminescence detection relies on the production of light from a chemical reaction in a sample.

In a dual color luminescence read mode, dual labels (such as gene reporters) causing the emission of different wavelength bands at the same time are measured.

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge contains the components for measuring the light intensity from luminescence. Since the light is emitted as a result of a chemical reaction, no excitation light and no excitation filters are required to measure luminescence.

The luminescence can be measured with no emission filters, or an emission wavelength selected from within the specified range. See [Measurement Specifications on page 158](#).



Note: This detection cartridge is not suitable for measurement of flash luminescence reactions, which require injectors.

The Chroma-Glo assay system is a further development of the Dual-Glo™ luciferase gene reporter assays. The two types of assays are designed to normalize the activity of the one, more specific reporter of gene expression with the activity of a different reporter, to cancel out variations in the experimental (biological) assay parameters.

In the Dual-Glo Luciferase assay system, the one reporter is activated, and then measured. During the activation of the other reporter, the emission induced by the first reporter is extinguished. The Dual-Glo Luciferase assay system requires no emission filters, and can be measured using a Glow Luminescence (LUM) Detection Cartridge.

The Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge contains emission filters designed for the Chroma-Glo reagents. One major benefit of the Chroma-Glo assay system over the Dual-Glo luciferase system is it requires only a single reagent addition step. However, this also requires a compensation for overlap in the emission spectra induced by the concurrent activity of the Chroma-Glo dual luciferases.

For maximum sensitivity, the Chroma Glo reagents should be read within the first hour after preparation.

For typical applications and a discussion on the advantages of the one over the other assay system, go to www.promega.com.

For information on analyzing dual color luminescence data, see the following topics:

- [Color Separation and Red to Green Ratios on page 156](#)
- [Normalized Ratios and Relative Response Ratios on page 157](#)

For more information about luminescence, see [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#).

Dual-Glo and Chroma-Glo are trademarks of Promega Corporation.

Color Separation and Red to Green Ratios

As suggested by Promega, before ratios can be taken from the Chroma-Glo red and green emission channels, some mutual overlap of the emission spectra needs to be considered. This spectral overlap can be exactly quantified by the help of controls which contain only the one or the other reporter, respectively (red control, green control).

The spectral overlap is defined by two coefficients (CT_{GR} and CT_{RG} , see [Calculations on page 158](#)), which depend on the individual emission filters (the detection cartridge), and the relative sensitivity of the PMTs (the detection platform) in the red and the green wavelength range. Therefore, the values of these two coefficients need to be established for each detection system (a combination of the detection cartridge and the instrument). If determined once for a system, the two values can be carried over into further protocols, although it is good practice to provide such controls in replicates for each assay.

Normalized Ratios and Relative Response Ratios

The decay of the red signal is considerable, with a half-life of about 30 minutes, when compared with the decay of the green signal. Thus, the color corrected red to green ratios (R:G, see [Color Separation and Red to Green Ratios on page 156](#)) are normalized with the value of, for example, a negative control, which is then named the Normalized Ratio (NR).

$$NR = (R / G)_{\text{sample}} / (R / G)_{\text{neg}}$$

In the case that a negative and a positive control have been defined in the plate layout, the software can calculate a Relative Response Ratio (RRR), quantifying a sample in the range between the negative and the positive control. RRR can become negative in some cases.

$$RRR = [(R / G)_{\text{sample}} - (R / G)_{\text{neg}}] / [(R / G)_{\text{pos}} - (R / G)_{\text{neg}}] \times 100\%$$

which can be read as

$$RRR = [NR_{\text{sample}} - 1] / [NR_{\text{pos}} - 1] \times 100\%$$

Microplate Recommendations

The following information is specific to this detection cartridge. For general microplate selection and handling guidelines, see [Selecting Suitable Microplate Types on page 83](#).

Table 6-18: Microplate Selection Guidelines for the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge

Read Mode	Microplate Type	Other Considerations
Luminescence (LUM)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using an unidilled plate for luminescence measurements.
Luminescence, Dual Color (LUM-Dual)	Solid white	When an application specifies a surface treatment, use only microplates with the correct treatment. Molecular Devices recommends using an unidilled plate for luminescence measurements.



Note: White microplates provide significantly higher signal than black microplates, and are recommended if high sensitivity is required. White microplates can, however, exhibit some detectable phosphorescence which increases background after being exposed to light (in particular under neon lights). For maximum sensitivity, Molecular Devices recommends to prepare microplates under reduced ambient light conditions, and to adapt the microplates to dark for 10 to 30 minutes before measurement.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-19: Measurement Specification for Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Dual Color Luminescence (LUM) (Chroma-Glo) Detection Cartridge
Short name	LUM-CHROM
Part number	0200-7013
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Luminescence (LUM) Luminescence, Dual Color (LUM-Dual)
Type	Dual emission
Number of slots	1 slot
Light source	None
Wavelength range	EM1: 510-60 EM2: LP610
Labels	Labels compatible with the wavelength range
Application	Designed for use with Promega Chroma-Glo reagents

Calculations

Formulas used for the color separation are derived from the following set of equations:

$$\text{Equation 1: } L_{rf} = \text{Red} + \text{Green} \times CT_{RG}$$

$$\text{Equation 2: } L_{gf} = \text{Red} \times CT_{GR} + \text{Green}$$

where L_{rf} is the luminescence of a sample as measured through the red filter, L_{gf} is the luminescence of a sample as measured through the green filter, Red quantifies sample content of luciferase inducing the red emission spectrum, Green quantifies sample content of luciferase inducing the green emission spectrum, CT_{RG} is the relative overlap (spectral cross talk) of green spectrum seen in the red emission channel, and CT_{GR} is the relative overlap (spectral cross talk) of red spectrum seen in the green emission channel.

The algebraic solutions to **(Equation 1)** and **(Equation 2)** are:

$$\text{Equation 3: Red} = (L_{rf} - [L_{gf} \times CT_{RG}]) / (1 - CT_{GR} \times CT_{RG})$$

$$\text{Equation 4: Green} = (L_{gf} - [L_{rf} \times CT_{GR}]) / (1 - CT_{RG} \times CT_{GR})$$

The unknown coefficients for the overlap (CT) are determined by measuring and inserting the red only and green only controls into **(Equation 1)** and **(Equation 2)**, respectively, yielding

$$\text{Equation 5: } R_{rf} = \text{Red}_{\text{Control}} + 0 \times CT_{RG}$$

$$\text{Equation 6: } R_{gf} = \text{Red}_{\text{Control}} \times CT_{GR} + 0$$

and

$$\text{Equation 7: } G_{rf} = 0 \times CT_{GR} + \text{Green}_{\text{Control}} \times CT_{RG}$$

$$\text{Equation 8: } G_{gf} = 0 \times CT_{RG} + \text{Green}_{\text{Control}}$$

where $\text{Red}_{\text{Control}}$ is the control inducing the red emission spectrum only, $\text{Green}_{\text{Control}}$ is the control inducing the green emission spectrum only, R_{rf} is the red control as measured through the red filter, R_{gf} is the red control as measured through the green filter, G_{rf} is the green control as measured through the red filter, and G_{gf} is the green control as measured through the green filter.

Paired equations **(Equation 5)** and **(Equation 6)**, and **(Equation 7)** and **(Equation 8)** can be resolved into

$$\text{Equation 9: } CT_{GR} = \frac{R_{gf}}{R_{rf}}$$

$$\text{Equation 10: } CT_{RG} = \frac{G_{rf}}{G_{gf}}$$

Because **(Equation 9)** and **(Equation 10)** are ratiometric, the concentration of the red and green only controls can be undefined, though shall be considerable to yield accurate measurement values.

By inserting the solutions for the coefficients CT enumerated above in **(Equation 9)** and **(Equation 10)** into **(Equation 3)** and **(Equation 4)** above, it can be confirmed that the resulting equations comply with those provided by Promega, after normalization with the filter efficiencies $E_{rf} = (R_{rf} / R)$ and $E_{gf} = (G_{gf} / G)$, respectively. The values for filter efficiencies are stored in the cartridge, thus requiring a different measurement to get R and G (without emission filter) unnecessary.

All the equations in this section make no assumption on the nature of the signal, thus could be similarly applied to other dual label detection with overlapping spectra, for example in an absorbance or a fluorescence reading.

ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge

The ScanLater™ Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge enables time-resolved fluorescence read mode for Western Blot membranes.

The Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Western Blot Assay Kit is a novel system for protein analysis that is incorporated into a SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform. Membranes are incubated with Eu-chelate labeled secondary antibodies or streptavidin that bind specifically to the target protein-specific primary antibody. For more information, contact your representative or search the knowledge base for **ScanLater** or **Western Blot** at www.moleculardevices.com/support.html.

The ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge occupies two (2) slots in the detection cartridge drawer.

For installation instructions, see [Installing a Detection Cartridge on page 84](#).

Western Blot reads use time-resolved fluorescence read mode with a membrane read type. See [Membrane Read Type on page 24](#).

You can create protocols that use the ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge in the SoftMax Pro Software. For information on creating protocols, see “Creating a Protocol” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.

You can use the Protocol Manager in the SoftMax Pro Software to quickly find and open a predefined protocol.

More protocols and updated protocols can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base on the Molecular Devices support web site (www.moleculardevices.com/support.html) or from the protocol sharing web site (www.softmaxpro.org).

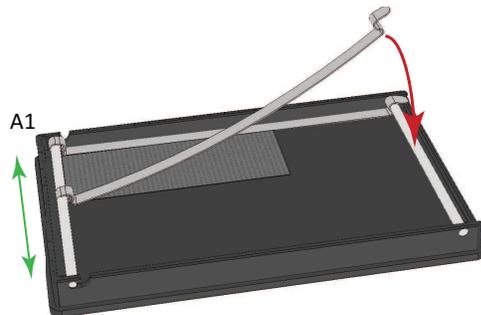
Loading the Membrane into the Membrane Holder



Note: Handle membranes only by the edges using clean forceps. Take care to not touch the membrane with gloved or bare hands.

To scan the membrane in a SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform, the membrane must be placed in a Molecular Devices ScanLater™ Membrane Holder. The maximum size for a membrane is 109 mm x 77 mm to let it fit in the membrane holder.

1. Place the membrane on the membrane holder with one corner of the membrane aligned with the A1 corner of the membrane holder.



2. Slide the holder clips to place them over the membrane as close to the edges of the membrane as possible to expose the maximum scanning area of the blot.
3. Lower the holder clips into place and then gently press the end of each holder clip to snap it into place and secure the membrane to the holder.



CAUTION! To prevent damage to the instrument or the membrane holder, make sure that all the holder clips are securely snapped into place before inserting the membrane holder into the microplate reader.

4. Load the membrane holder into the microplate drawer with the A1 corner in the A1 position of the drawer. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#).

Cleaning the Membrane Holder

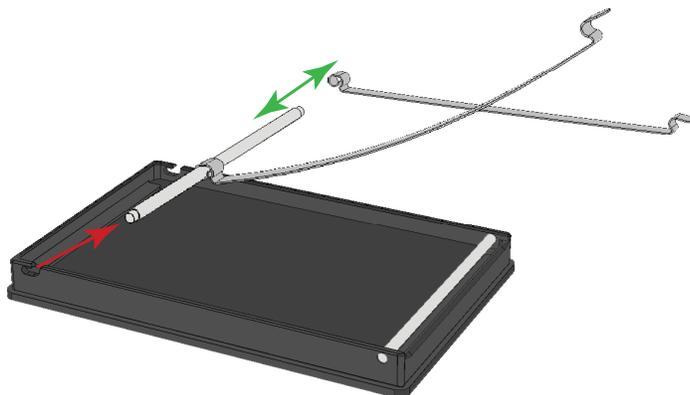
To remove dust, buffer residue, and smudges that can have a negative effect on image quality or contaminate the membrane, always clean the membrane holder before loading a new membrane for scanning.

The scanning surface can be wiped with methanol, rinsed with a small volume of water, followed by a final rinse with isopropanol to help prevent blot contamination. Pressurized “canned air” can be helpful in removing dust and lint.

Adding or Removing Membrane Holder Clips

You can add or remove the holder clips on the membrane holder as needed for your application.

1. If the clips are in the locked position, then unfasten the clips by pulling up on the tabs.
2. Slide the retainer bar on the "A" column side of the membrane holder out from its slots.



3. Slide the holder clip on or off the end of the retainer bar.



Note: When you add a holder clip, make sure that the tab is on top and that the center of the holder clip curves downward toward the plate.

4. Slide the retainer bar into the two slots and press the bar until it snaps into place.

Measurement Specifications

The specifications for measurements using the ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge are shown in the following table.

Table 6-20: Measurement Specification for ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	ScanLater Western Blot (WB) Detection Cartridge
Short name	SCANLATER WB
Part number	0200-7027
Weight	2.6 lbs (1.2 kg)
Read modes	Time-Resolved Fluorescence (TRF)
Type	Single emission
Number of slots	2 slots
Light source	Ultra high power LED
Filter set	EX: 340-80 EM: 616-10
Labels	Europium chelate
Detection limit	50 amol
Linear dynamic range	5 logs in a single membrane scan

Chapter 7: Maintenance and Troubleshooting

Do only the maintenance described in this guide. Maintenance procedures other than those specified in this guide can be done only by Molecular Devices service engineers. See [Obtaining Support on page 181](#).

Before operating the instrument or performing maintenance operations, make sure that you are familiar with the safety information in this guide. See [Safety Information on page 7](#).

The following topics describe maintenance and troubleshooting procedures that can be done by users to ensure optimum operation of the instrument.

- [Performing Preventive Maintenance on page 166](#)
- [Cleaning the Instrument on page 167](#)
- [Replacing Fuses on page 168](#)
- [Moving the Instrument on page 170](#)
- [Packing the Instrument for Storage or Service on page 171](#)
- [Troubleshooting on page 180](#)

For SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer maintenance and troubleshooting procedures, see [Cytometer Maintenance and Troubleshooting on page 116](#).



WARNING! Service or maintenance procedures other than those specified in this guide can be done only by trained service engineers. When service is required, contact a Molecular Devices service engineer.

Performing Preventive Maintenance

To ensure optimum operation of the instrument, do the following preventive maintenance procedures as necessary:

- Wipe off visible dust with a lint-free cloth to avoid dust build up on the instrument.
- Wipe up all spills immediately.
- Open the detection cartridge drawer only when installing or removing a detection cartridge.
- When a detection cartridge is not in use and removed from the instrument, always store the detection cartridge in the detection cartridge box.
- Follow applicable decontamination procedures as instructed by your laboratory safety officer.
- Use an applicable Validation Plate to regularly test the functionality of the instrument and detection cartridges.. For more details, contact sales or service.
- Contact or an approved dealer for annual preventive maintenance. Molecular Devices recommends a yearly preventive maintenance be done on the instrument by a trained and qualified service engineer.
- Respond as required to all error messages displayed by the software.

Cleaning the Instrument



WARNING! BIOHAZARD Always wear gloves during cleaning procedures that could involve contact with either hazardous or biohazardous materials or fluids.



CAUTION! Never clean the inside of the instrument. Cleaning the interior can cause damage to the instrument.

Always turn the power switch off and disconnect the power cord from the main power source before using liquids to clean the instrument.

Wipe up all spills immediately.

Periodically clean the outside surfaces of the instrument using a cloth or sponge that has been lightly dampened with water.

If required, clean the surfaces using a mild soap solution diluted with water or a glass cleaner and then wipe with a damp cloth or sponge to remove all residue.

If needed, clean the microplate drawer using a cloth or sponge that has been lightly dampened with water.



CAUTION! Do not use abrasive cleaners.



CAUTION! Do not spray cleaner directly onto the instrument.



CAUTION! Do not let water or other fluids drip inside the instrument.

Replacing Fuses

If the instrument does not seem to be getting power after switching it on, check to see whether the supplied power cord is securely plugged into a functioning power outlet and to the power port on the rear of the instrument.

If the power failed while the instrument was on, check that the power cord is not loose or disconnected and that power to the power outlet is functioning properly.

If these checks fail to remedy the loss of power, replace the fuses. You can obtain replacement fuses from Molecular Devices. For fuse specifications and part numbers, see [Physical Specifications on page 189](#).

CAUTION! Do not touch or loosen screws or parts other than those specifically designated in the instructions. Doing so could cause misalignment and possibly void the warranty.

The fuses are located in the fuse carrier on the rear of the instrument.

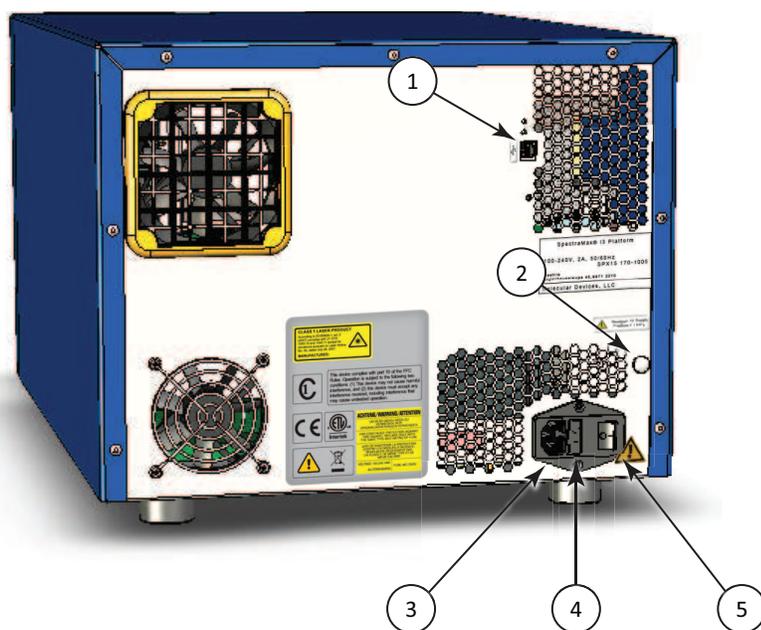


Figure 7-1: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	USB Port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Power port
4	Fuse carrier
5	Power switch

With a SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer installed, a different pair of fuses exist in a separate fuse carrier. See [Replacing Fuses in the Cytometer on page 116](#).

To replace the fuses:



WARNING! HIGH VOLTAGE Always turn the power switch off and disconnect the power cord from the main power source before performing a maintenance procedure that requires removal of a panel or cover or disassembly of an interior instrument component.

1. Switch the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the off position.
2. Unplug the power cord from the power port.
3. Use a small slot-head screwdriver to gently press on the carrier-release tab and then pull the fuse carrier to remove it from the instrument.

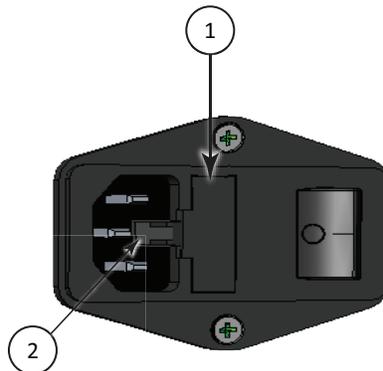


Figure 7-2: Releasing the fuse carrier

Item	Description
1	Fuse carrier
2	Carrier-release tab

4. Gently pull the old fuses from the carrier by hand.
5. Gently place new fuses into the carrier by hand.
6. Replace the fuse carrier.
7. Plug the power cord into the power port.
8. Turn on power to the instrument.



Note: If the instrument still does not power on after changing the fuses, contact Molecular Devices technical support. See [Obtaining Support on page 181](#).

Moving the Instrument



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.

Before moving the SpectraMax i3 Instrument, make sure that the new location is a dry, flat work area that has sufficient space for the instrument, host computer, and required cables. See [Instrument Specifications on page 183](#).



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

To move the instrument:

1. Disconnect the gas supply line, if applicable. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply on page 74](#).
 2. Install the transport locks on the microplate drawer and the detection cartridge drawer. See [Installing the Transport Locks on page 171](#).
 3. If you are transporting the instrument to a different building, pack the instrument in the original packaging. See [Packing the Instrument on page 176](#).
-



CAUTION! Keep the box upright. Do not tip or tilt the box or place it on its side.

Packing the Instrument for Storage or Service

To minimize the possibility of damage during storage or shipment, the instrument should be repacked only in the original packaging materials. Correctly repacking the instrument includes following applicable decontamination procedures and installing the transport locks on the microplate drawer and detection cartridge drawers.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

The instrument should be stored in a dry, dust-free, environmentally controlled area. For more information about acceptable storage environments, see [Instrument Specifications on page 183](#).

Packing up the instrument includes the following procedures:

- Disconnecting the gas supply line, if applicable. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply on page 74](#).
- Installing the transport locks on the microplate and detection cartridge drawers. See [Installing the Transport Locks on page 171](#).
- Packing the instrument in the original packaging. See [Packing the Instrument on page 176](#).

Installing the Transport Locks

Before moving or packing the SpectraMax i3 Instrument, install the transport locks on the microplate drawer and the detection cartridge drawer to protect the instrument from damage during shipping.

This procedure requires the following tool:

Table 7-1: Required Tool

Part Number	Description
YW 000 006	Hex key, 2.0 mm



CAUTION! Do not touch or loosen screws or parts other than those specifically designated in the instructions. Doing so could cause misalignment and possibly void the warranty.



CAUTION! The front cover is held onto the front of the instrument by powerful magnets. Keep magnetic storage devices or strips, such as hard drives, key cards, and credit cards, away from the instrument covers.

To install the transport locks:

1. Turn on the power switch on the rear of the instrument.
2. Remove all detection cartridges from the detection cartridge drawer. See [Removing a Detection Cartridge on page 88](#).
3. Close the detection cartridge drawer.
4. Remove the microplate, if present, from the microplate drawer. See [Loading and Unloading Microplates on page 82](#).
5. Leave the microplate drawer open.
6. Switch the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the off position.
7. Unplug the power cord from the power port on the rear of the instrument.
8. Place the microplate drawer transport lock on the end of the microplate drawer.
9. Use the 2.0 mm hex key to tighten screws #2 and #3 until the lock is attached to the microplate drawer.

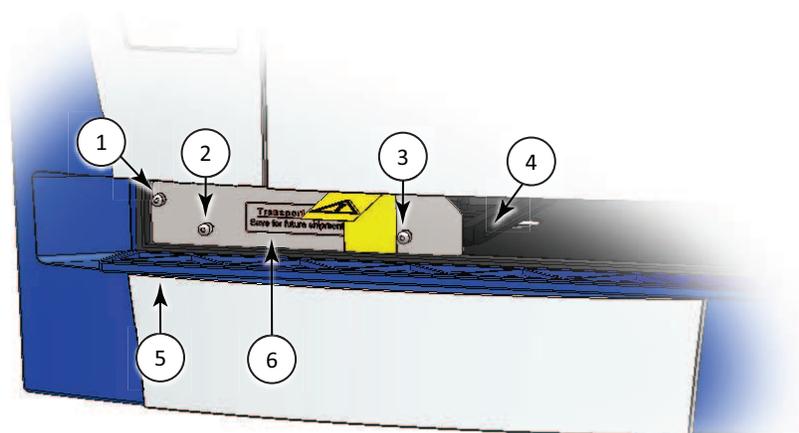


Figure 7-3: Microplate Drawer Transport Lock

Item	Description
1	Screw #1 fastens the lock to the internal frame of the instrument
2	Screw #2 fastens the lock to the microplate drawer
3	Screw #3 fastens the lock to the microplate drawer
4	Microplate drawer
5	Microplate chamber door in open position
6	Microplate drawer transport lock

10. Gently push the microplate drawer into the instrument and as far to the left as possible until screw #1, which fastens the lock to the internal frame of the instrument, is lined up with the hole on the internal frame. The microplate chamber door must be held open manually until the transport lock is fastened.
11. Tighten screw #1 until the microplate drawer is securely locked in place.
12. Route the yellow tab connected to the transport lock so that it will pass over the top of the microplate chamber door when closed.
13. Gently close the microplate chamber door.
14. Firmly pull on the front cover to remove it and then set it aside. The front cover is held onto the front of the instrument by powerful magnets.

*** Tip:** It is easiest to remove the front cover by pulling from the bottom.

15. Slide the detection cartridge drawer forward until it is outside the main instrument.
16. Place the tab on the detection cartridge drawer transport lock into the slot on the bottom of the detection cartridge drawer.

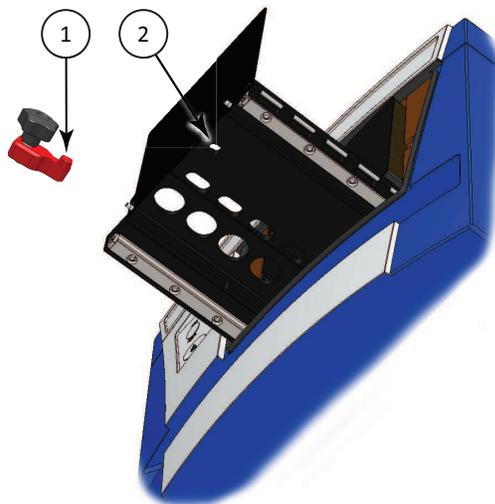


Figure 7-4: Detection Cartridge Drawer Bottom View

Item	Description
1	Detection cartridge drawer transport lock tab
2	Detection cartridge drawer transport lock slot

17. Gently push the detection cartridge drawer back inside the instrument.

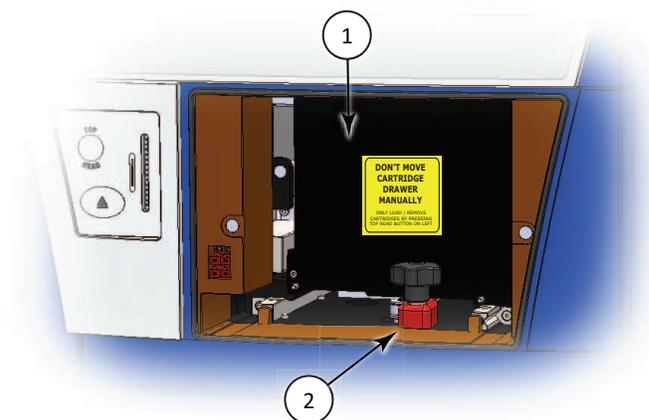


Figure 7-5: Detection Cartridge Drawer Transport Lock

Item	Description
1	Detection cartridge drawer
2	Detection cartridge drawer transport lock

18. Align the detection cartridge transport lock with the threaded hole on the floor of the detection cartridge drawer chamber, and then turn the transport lock clockwise to lock the detection cartridge drawer in place.
19. Replace the front cover by aligning the magnets on the inside of the front cover with the magnets on the instrument base.

For information on packing the instrument in its original container, see [Packing the Instrument on page 176](#).

Disconnecting the Instrument Cables

Before disconnecting the cables, make sure that you have disconnected the gas supply line, if applicable. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply](#) on page 74.

 **Note:** If you are disconnecting the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, do not use this procedure. See [Packing the Cytometer for Storage or Service](#) on page 119.

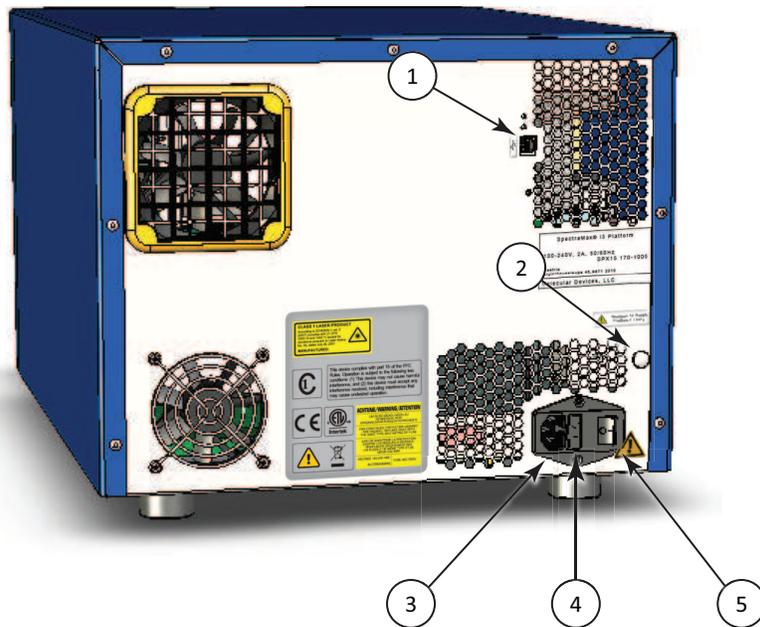


Figure 7-6: Power Switch, Fuses, and Connection Ports

Item	Description
1	USB Port
2	Gas inlet quick-connect fitting
3	Power port
4	Fuse carrier
5	Power switch

To disconnect the instrument cables:

1. Make sure that the SoftMax Pro Software is not running.
2. Turn off the connected computer.
3. Switch the power switch on the rear of the instrument to the off position.
4. Unplug the power cord from the power port on the rear of the instrument.
5. Unplug the power cord from the grounded electrical wall outlet.
6. Disconnect the USB cable from the USB port on the rear of the instrument.
7. Disconnect the USB cable from the controlling computer.
8. Store the power cord and the USB cable in the instrument accessories toolbox.

Packing the Instrument

The original packaging is specifically designed to protect the instrument during transportation.

Detection cartridges must be packed and shipped separately from the instrument.



WARNING! LIFTING HAZARD. To prevent injury, use a minimum of two people to lift the instrument.



CAUTION! When transporting the instrument, warranty claims are void if damage during transport is caused by improper packing.

To pack the instrument in the original packaging:

1. Make sure that all detection cartridges and microplates have been removed and the transport locks have been installed. See [Installing the Transport Locks on page 171](#).
2. Make sure that the SoftMax Pro Software is not running and that the computer is turned off.
3. Make sure that the power switch on the rear of the instrument is in the off position and that the power cord and USB cables are disconnected from the instrument. See [Disconnecting the Instrument Cables on page 175](#).
4. Store the power cord and the USB cable in the instrument accessories toolbox.
5. If applicable, make sure the gas supply line is disconnected. See [Connecting and Disconnecting a Gas Supply on page 74](#).
6. If applicable, make sure the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer has been removed and stored. See [Packing the Cytometer for Storage or Service on page 119](#).

7. Wrap the SpectraMax i3 Instrument in static-free plastic.
8. Replace the two pieces of molded foam packaging on each end of the instrument.

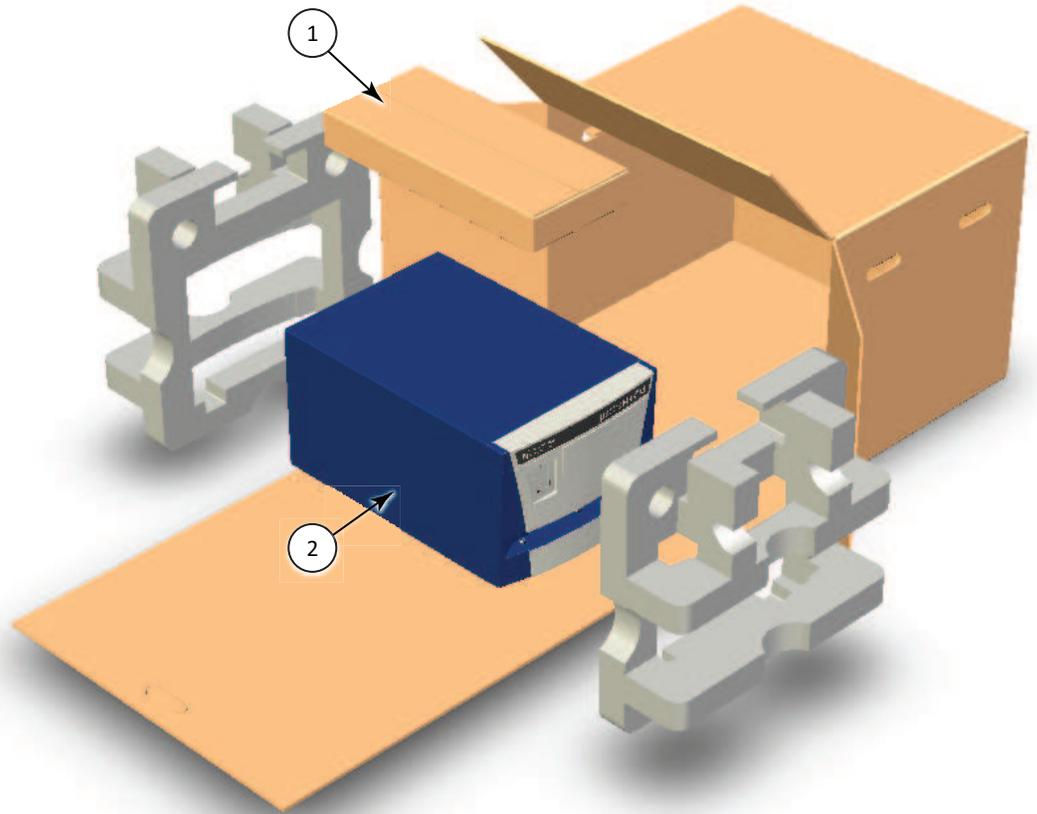


Figure 7-7: Removing the Accessory Tool Box and the Foam Packing

Item	Description
1	Accessory Tool Box
2	SpectraMax i3 Instrument



CAUTION! Keep the instrument upright and level when lifting. Do not tip or shake the instrument to prevent damage to the moving components inside the instrument.

9. Place the accessories box in the foam packaging above the instrument.

10. Place the instrument and accessories box on the flat cardboard piece and slide it into the original box.

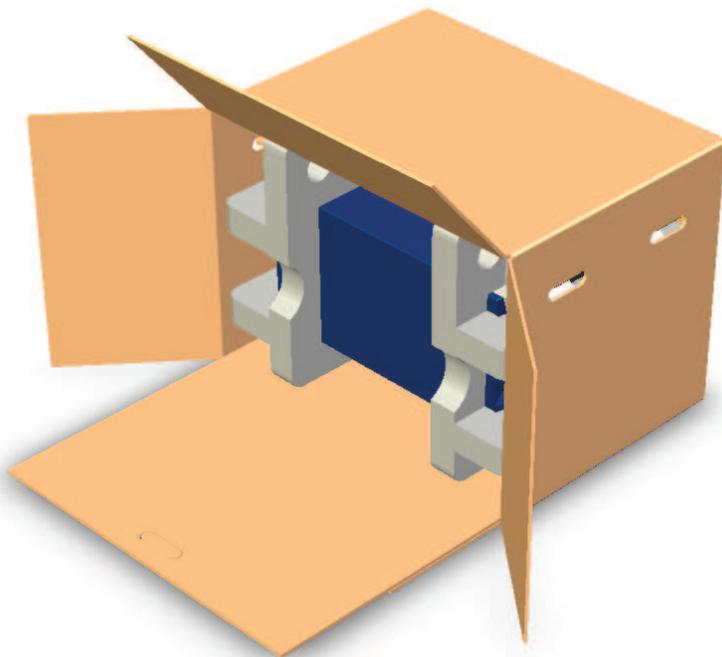


Figure 7-8: Sliding the Instrument into the Box

11. Fold the cardboard flap up inside the box.

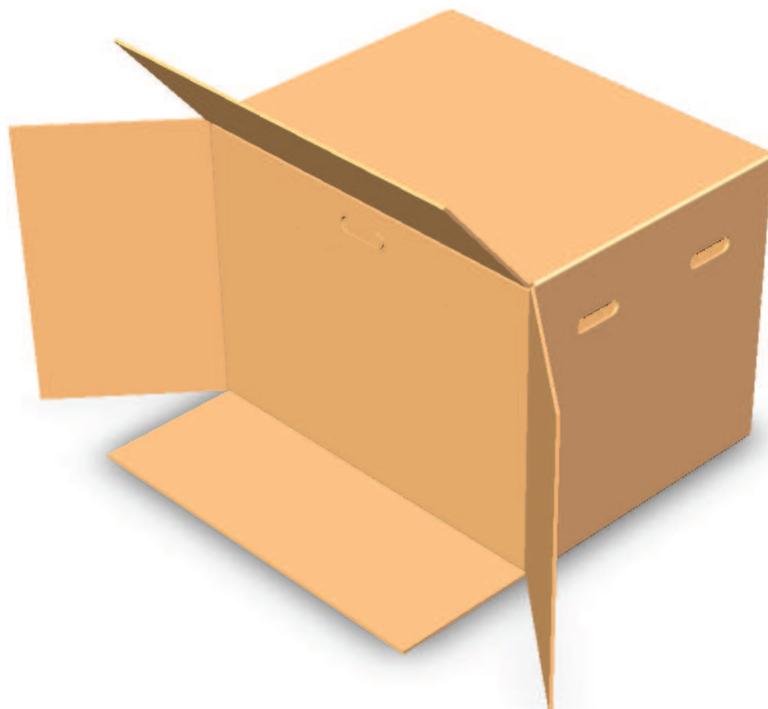


Figure 7-9: Folding the Cardboard Flap Inside the Box

12. Along the side labeled **Open Here**, close the box and seal it with packing tape.



Figure 7-10: Closing the Box

Troubleshooting



WARNING! Service or maintenance procedures other than those specified in this guide can be done only by trained service engineers. When service is required, contact a Molecular Devices service engineer.

Do the following troubleshooting techniques when necessary.

Table 7-2: Troubleshooting the Instrument

If	Then
All LEDs on the status indicator are out.	Check the fuses. See Replacing Fuses on page 168 .
The fuses look burned or the filaments are broken.	Replace the fuses. See Replacing Fuses on page 168 .
All LEDs on the status indicator are out, the power is on, the fuses are okay, and the instrument does not operate.	Contact technical support.
The instrument does not respond to commands from the software.	<p>Check the LED status indicators and respond as required. See Status LEDs on page 79.</p> <p>Check the USB connections to the instrument and the controlling computer.</p> <p>In the software, verify that the configured USB port matches the USB port connecting the instrument to the computer. See “Selecting an Instrument” in the SoftMax Pro Software application help or user guide.</p> <p>Contact technical support.</p>
Functional failure of a detection cartridge	Contact technical support.

For more information about the LED status indicators, see [Status LEDs on page 79](#) and [Cytometer Status LEDs on page 113](#).

Obtaining Support

Molecular Devices is a leading worldwide manufacturer and distributor of analytical instrumentation, software and reagents. We are committed to the quality of our products and to fully supporting our customers with the highest possible level of technical service.

Our support web site, www.moleculardevices.com/support.html, has a link to the Knowledge Base with technical notes, software upgrades, safety data sheets, and other resources. If you do not find the answers you are seeking, follow the links to the Technical Support Service Request Form to send an email message to a pool of technical support representatives.

You can contact your local representative or contact Molecular Devices Technical Support by telephone at 800-635-5577 (U.S. only) or +1 408-747-1700. In Europe call +44 (0) 118 944 8000.

Please have the system ID number, system serial number, software version number, and the system owner's name available when you call.



WARNING! BIOHAZARD. It is your responsibility to decontaminate components of the instrument before requesting service by a service engineer or returning parts to Molecular Devices for repair. Molecular Devices will not accept items that have not been decontaminated where it is applicable to do so. If parts are returned, they must be enclosed in a sealed plastic bag stating that the contents are safe to handle and are not contaminated.

Appendix A: Instrument Specifications

This appendix provides specifications for the SpectraMax i3 Instrument basic unit and the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer.

The specifications for each of the optional detection cartridges are in the section that describes the specific cartridge. See [Available Detection Cartridges on page 129](#).

Measurement Specifications

The following tables list the measurement specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument.

For the specifications of each of the optional detection cartridges, see the section describing the specific cartridge in [Available Detection Cartridges on page 129](#).

For measurement specifications of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer, see [Cytometer Measurement Specifications on page 186](#).

Table A-1: Absorbance Measurement Specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
Wavelength range	230 nm to 1000 nm
Wavelength selection	Monochromator tunable in 1 nm increments
Wavelength bandwidth	~4.0 nm full width half maximum
Wavelength accuracy	±2.0 nm across wavelength range
Wavelength repeatability	±1.0 nm
Photometric range	0.000 to 4.000 OD
Photometric resolution	0.001 OD
Photometric accuracy/linearity, 0.0 to 2.0 OD	< ±0.010 OD ±1.0%, 0 to 2 OD
Photometric precision (repeatability)	< ±0.003 OD ±1.0%, 0 to 2 OD
Stray light	≤ 0.05% at 230 nm
Photometric stabilization	Instantaneous
Photometric drift	None (continuous referencing of monochromatic input)
Calibration	Automatic before every endpoint read and before the first kinetic read
Optical alignment	None required
Light source	High power Xenon flash lamp
Average lamp lifetime (Based on specifications from the	1 billion flashes or 2 years normal operation (approx. 500,000 96-well microplates at normal speed or

Table A-1: Absorbance Measurement Specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument (continued)

Item	Description
manufacturer. Individual average lamp lifetime can vary.)	400,000 384-well microplates at speed read)
Photodetectors	Silicon photodiode

Table A-2: Fluorescence Intensity Measurement Specification of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
Sensitivity (top read) For properly functioning, operating, and maintained equipment	96-well Guaranteed: 3 pM fluorescein Optimized: 0.5 pM fluorescein 384-well Guaranteed: 4 pM fluorescein Optimized: 1 pM fluorescein
Sensitivity (bottom read) For properly functioning, operating, and maintained equipment	96-well Guaranteed: 10 pM fluorescein Optimized: 5 pM fluorescein 384-well Guaranteed: 20 pM fluorescein Optimized: 5 pM fluorescein
Wavelength range	EX: 250 nm to 830 nm EM: 270 nm to 850 nm
Wavelength accuracy	±2 nm
Wavelength precision	±1 nm
Wavelength selection	Monochromators tunable in 1.0 nm increments
Bandwidth	EX: 9 nm or 15 nm EM: 15 nm or 25 nm
Number of excitation/emission pairs per microplate	4
Dynamic range	>10 ⁶ in 96-well black plates: auto gain circuitry
System validation	Self calibrating with built-in fluorescence calibrators
Light source	High power Xenon flash lamp; LEDs in the visible range
Average lamp lifetime	1 billion flashes or 2 years normal operation
Detector	Photo multiplier tube

Table A-3: Luminescence Measurement Specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
Sensitivity (top read) For properly functioning, operating, and maintained equipment	96-well Guaranteed: 75 pM ATP-Glow Optimized: 15 pM ATP-Glow 384-well Guaranteed: 200 pM ATP-Glow Optimized: 30 pM ATP-Glow
Wavelength range	300 nm to 850 nm
Wavelength accuracy	±2 nm
Wavelength precision	±1 nm
Dynamic range	>6 decades
Crosstalk	<0.3% in white 96-well <0.3% in white 384-well

Cytometer Measurement Specifications

The following tables list the measurement specifications of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer and the Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge.

Table A-4: Measurement Specification for SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

Item	Description
Light source	Proprietary, solid-state illumination
Wavelength range	EX: White, EM: Brightfield EX: 456/20 nm, EM: 541/108 nm EX: 625/20 nm, EM: 713/123 nm
Detector	1.25 megapixel, 12-bit, high-sensitivity CCD camera
Objective	Single 4X objective
Resolution	1.875 μm x 1.875 μm pixel size
Autofocus	Proprietary laser-scanning autofocus
Microplates	96-well and 384-well, flat-bottom, clear-bottom, ANSI/SBS-conformant microplates

Table A-5: Measurement Specification for Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge

Item	Description
Detection cartridge name	Transmitted Light (TL) Detection Cartridge
Short name	TL
Part number	5022671
Weight	1.5 lbs (0.7 kg)
Read modes	Imaging
Type	Transmitted light
Number of slots	1
Light source	Ultra high power LED
Wavelength range	White light, brightfield

Computer System Specifications

SoftMax Pro Software version 6 can be installed on a computer with the following system specifications.

The SpectraMax i3 Instrument requires a computer with a minimum of one USB 2.0 port for connecting the instrument to the computer.

Table A-6: Minimum and Recommended Requirements for SoftMax Pro Software

Item	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	Single-core, 2 GHz or faster	Quad core or faster
Operating system	Windows 7, 32-bit or 64-bit (x86 or x64) and .NET Framework 4.0 (.NET Framework 4.0 is installed automatically by the SoftMax Pro Software installer if necessary.)	Windows 7, 32-bit or 64-bit (x86 or x64), or Windows 8, 32-bit or 64-bit (x86 or x64)
Data connection	USB 2.0 port	USB 2.0 ports
Memory	2 GB RAM	4 GB RAM If running on a virtual machine, Molecular Devices recommends a minimum of 6 GB RAM. For automation, Molecular Devices recommends a minimum of 8 GB RAM.
Hard disk	500 MB of available space	1 GB of available space, or more
Graphics display	Graphics display adapter 1024 x 768 or higher-resolution display	32-bit graphics display with 256 MB video RAM 1280 x 1024 or higher-resolution display
Software installation and activation	CD/DVD drive Internet connection or external USB drive	CD/DVD drive Internet connection

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer requires greater minimum computer system specifications than those required for the SoftMax Pro Software. See [Imaging Cytometer Computer System Specifications on page 188](#).

Imaging Cytometer Computer System Specifications

The SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer is shipped with a computer that meets greater minimum computer system specifications than those required for the standard installation.

Table A-7: Minimum Computer System Requirements for the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer

Item	Requirement
Processor	Intel Xeon E5, 2.7 GHz, 8 cores or more
Operating system	Windows 7, 64-bit (x64) or Windows 8, 64-bit (x64)
Data connection	2 or more USB 3.0 ports and 2 or more USB 2.0 or later ports
Memory	16 GB or more DDR3 SDRAM at 1600 MHz
Hard disk	500 GB or larger, 7200 RPM or faster hard disk with a 32 MB or more buffer
Graphics display	512 MB nVIDIA graphics display 1280 x 1024 or higher-resolution display
Software installation and activation	CD/DVD drive Internet connection or external USB drive

To prevent data loss, turn off all sleep and hibernation settings for the hard disk, the CPU, and the USB ports. Also, disable automatic Windows Updates. You can update Windows manually when the instrument is not being used by the software. You can set these options in Windows Control Panel. See [Required Computer Settings on page 111](#).

Physical Specifications

The following tables list the physical specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform and the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer.

Table A-8: Physical Specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
Environment	Indoor use only
Power requirements SpectraMax i3 Instrument alone	100 VAC to 240 VAC \pm 10%, 2 amps, frequency range: 50/60 Hz
Power requirements SpectraMax i3 Instrument and SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer together	100 VAC to 240 VAC \pm 10%, frequency range: 50/60 Hz, Max. 350 VA
Dimensions SpectraMax i3 Instrument alone	39.20 cm W x 32.50 cm H x 60.55 cm D (15.43 in. 12.80 in. W x H x 24.80 in. D)
Dimensions SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer alone	39.20 cm W x 20.24 cm H x 60.55 cm D (15.43 in. W x 7.97 in. H x 24.80 in. D)
Dimensions SpectraMax i3 Instrument and SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer together	39.20 cm W x 44.59 cm H x 60.55 cm D (15.43 in. W x 17.56 in. H x 24.80 in. D)
Weight SpectraMax i3 Instrument alone	Without detection cartridges: 31 kg (68.3 lbs) For detection cartridge weights, see the detection cartridge chapters.
Weight SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer alone	17.7 kg (39 lbs)
Weight SpectraMax i3 Instrument and SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer together	48.7 kg (107.3 lbs)
Power disconnect and ventilation clearance (rear)	20 cm to 30 cm (7.9 in. to 11.8 in.) between the rear of the instrument and the wall
Drawer clearance (front)	18 cm (7.1 in.) for the microplate drawer and 15 cm (5.9 in.) for the detection cartridge drawer
Ambient operating temperature	15°C to 40°C (59°F to 104°F)
Ambient storage temperature	-5°C to 40°C (23°F to 104°F) continuous; -20°C to 50°C (-4°F to 122°F) transient (up to 10 hours)

Table A-8: Physical Specifications of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument (continued)

Item	Description
Humidity restrictions	15% to 75% (non-condensing) at 30°C (86°F)
Altitude restrictions	Up to 2000 m (6562 ft)
Air pressure restrictions	54 kPa to 106 kPa (7.8 PSI to 15.4 PSI)
Sound pressure level	Maximum sound pressure: 73 dBA Maximum sound pressure at one meter: 68 dBA
Installation category	II
Pollution degree	2
Fuses	250 V, 4 amp, 5 x 20 mm, slow-blow, UL recognized/CSA/VDE (part number: S US 400 153)
Data connection SpectraMax i3 Instrument alone	One (1) USB port
Data connection SpectraMax i3 Instrument and SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer together	Three (3) USB ports

Table A-9: Environmental Controls of the SpectraMax i3 Instrument

Item	Description
Temperature range	4°C (7.2°F) above ambient to 45°C (113°F)
Displayed	1°C (1.8°F) increments
Accuracy	±1°C (1.8°F) at 37°C set point
Uniformity	±0.75°C (1.4°F)
Gas inlet specification	Maximum air supply pressure: 0.4 MPa
Gas tubing specification	Polyurethane tubing, outside diameter = 4.0 mm



WARNING! Use a compressed gas supply in a well-ventilated area. The instrument is not air-tight, and so gas can escape into the atmosphere surrounding the instrument. When using potentially toxic gas, always observe the applicable cautionary procedures as defined by your safety officer to maintain a safe working environment.

Appendix B: System Diagrams and Dimensions

In the following drawings, the dimensions are show in centimeters and inches.

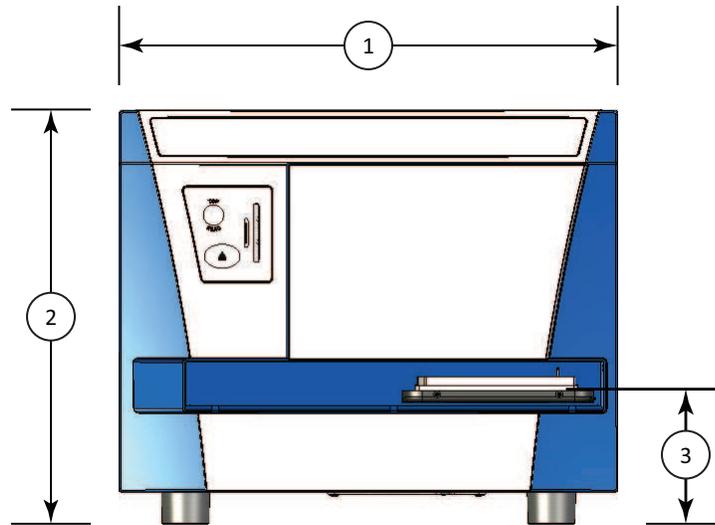


Figure B-1: Front View of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Width: 39.20 cm (15.43 in.)
2	Height: 32.50 cm (12.80 in.)
3	Height of Microplate Drawer: 11 cm (4.3 in.)

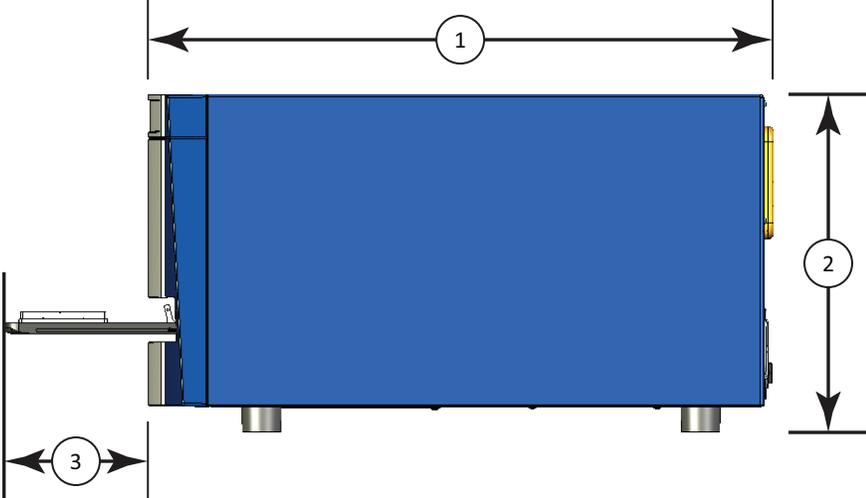


Figure B-2: Side View of the SpectraMax i3 Multi-Mode Detection Platform with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Depth: 60.55 cm (24.80 in.)
2	Height: 32.50 cm (12.80 in.)
3	Maximum Length of Opened Microplate Drawer: 17.5 cm (6.8 in.)

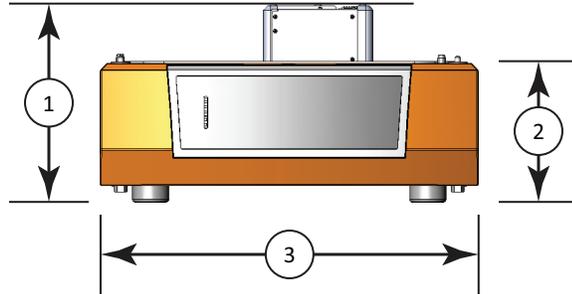


Figure B-3: Front View of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Full Height: 14.59 cm (7.97 in.)
2	Height of Housing: 14.59 cm (5.74 in.)
3	Width: 39.20 cm (15.43 in.)

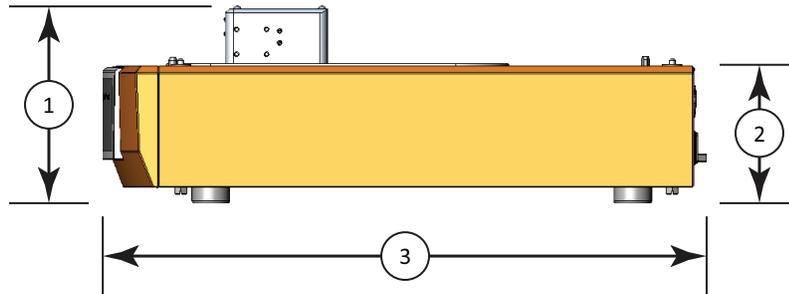


Figure B-4: Side View of the SpectraMax MiniMax Imaging Cytometer with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Full Height: 20.24 cm (7.97 in.)
2	Height of Housing: 14.59 cm (5.74 in.)
3	Depth: 60.55 cm (24.80 in.)

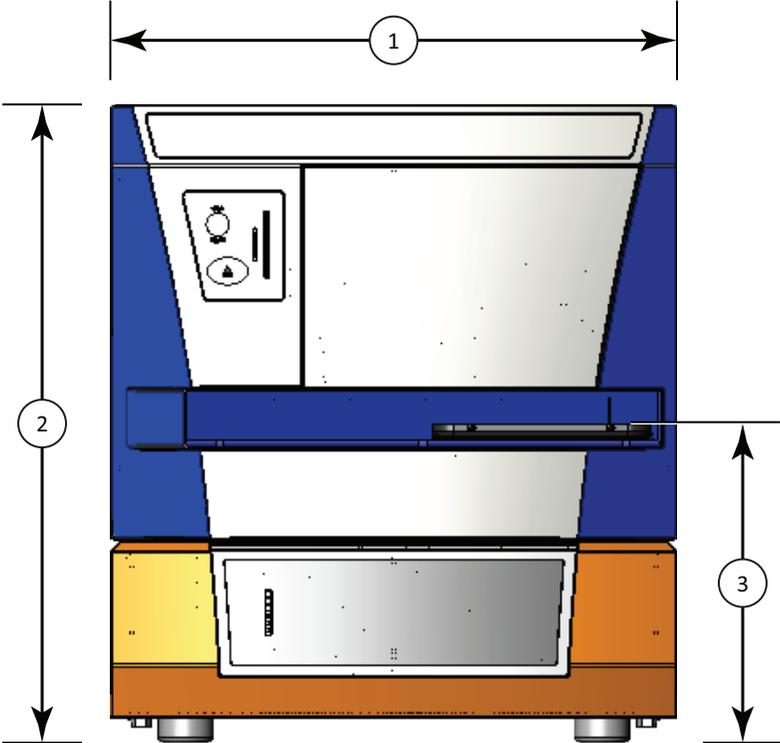


Figure B-5: Front View of the combined instruments with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Width: 39.20 cm (15.43 in.)
2	Height: 44.59 cm (17.56 in.)
3	Height of Microplate Drawer: 22 cm (8.6 in.)

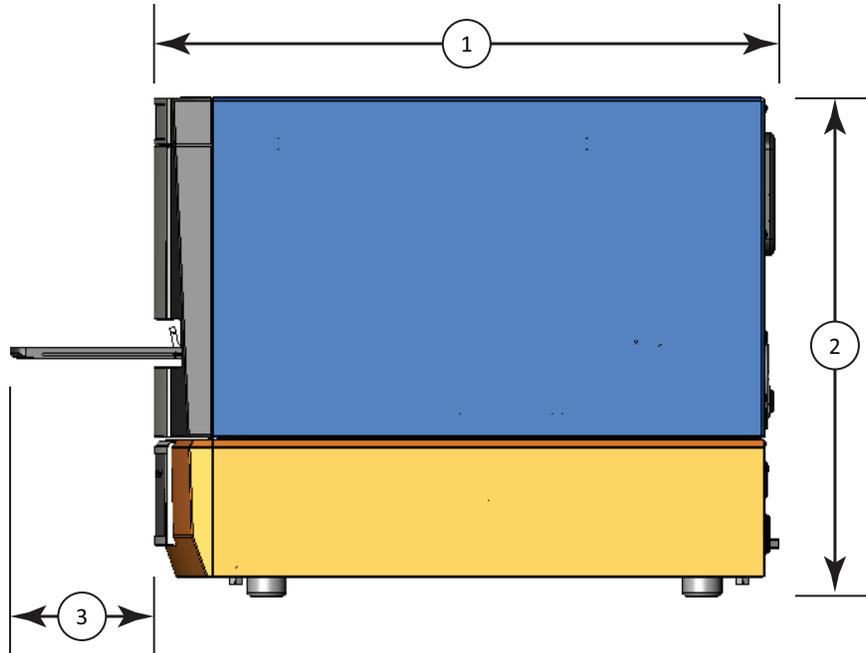


Figure B-6: Side View of the combined instruments with Dimensions

Item	Description
1	Depth: 60.55 cm (24.80 in.)
2	Height: 44.59 cm (17.56 in.)
3	Maximum Length of Opened Microplate Drawer: 17.5 cm (6.8 in.)

Appendix C: Electromagnetic Compatibility

C

Regulatory for Canada (ICES/NMB-001:2006)

This ISM device complies with Canadian ICES-001.

Cet appareil ISM est conforme à la norme NMB-001 du Canada.

ISM Equipment Classification (Group 1, Class A)

This equipment is designated as scientific equipment for laboratory use that intentionally generate and/or use conductively coupled radio-frequency energy for internal functioning, and are suitable for use in all establishments, other than domestic and those directly connected to a low voltage power supply network which supply buildings used for domestic purposes.

Information to the User (FCC Notice)

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for non-consumer ISM equipment, pursuant to part 18 of the FCC Rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference in a non-residential installation. This equipment generates, uses, and can radiate radio frequency energy and if not installed and used in accordance with the instructions, might cause harmful interference to radio communications. However, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation. If this equipment does cause harmful interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

- Reorient or relocate the receiving antenna.
- Increase the separation between the equipment and receiver.
- Connect the equipment into an outlet on a circuit different from that to which the receiver is connected.
- Consult the dealer or an experienced radio/TV technician for help.

In order to maintain compliance with FCC regulations, shielded cables must be used with this equipment. Operation with non-approved equipment or unshielded cables is likely to result in interference to radio and TV reception. The user is cautioned that changes and modifications made to the equipment without the approval of the manufacturer could void the user's authority to operate this equipment.

Glossary

A

Absorbance

Absorbance is the quantity of light absorbed by a solution. To measure absorbance accurately, it is necessary to eliminate light scatter. If there is no turbidity, then absorbance = optical density.

$$A = \log_{10}(I_0 / I) = -\log_{10}(I / I_0)$$

where I_0 is incident light before it enters the sample, I is the intensity of light after it passes through the sample, and A is the measured absorbance.

See [Absorbance Read Mode on page 25](#).

AlphaScreen

ALPHA stands for Amplified Luminescent Proximity Homogeneous Assay. AlphaScreen® is a bead-based chemistry used to study molecular interactions between moieties A and B, for example. When a biological interaction between A and B moves beads (coated with A and B, respectively) together, a cascade of chemical reactions produce a greatly amplified signal.

The cascade finally resulting in signal is triggered by laser excitation (680 nm), making a photosensitizer on the A-beads convert oxygen to an excited (singlet) state. That energized oxygen diffuses away from the A-bead. When reaching the B-bead in close proximity, it reacts with a thioxene derivative on the B-bead generating chemiluminescence at 370 nm. Energy transfer to a fluorescent dye on the same bead shifts the emission wavelength into the 520 nm to 620 nm range. The limited lifetime of singlet oxygen in solvent (~4 microseconds) lets diffusion reach up to only around 200 nm distance. Thus, only B-beads in the proximity of A-beads yield signal, which indicates binding between moieties A and B.

An AlphaScreen measurement includes a light pulse, by turning on the laser diode for a specified time, turning off the laser diode, followed by the measurement of the AlphaScreen signal, as specified in the measurement protocol timing parameters.



Note: AlphaScreen beads are light sensitive. Beads are best handled under subdued (<100 lux) or green filtered (Roscolux filters #389 from Rosco, or equivalent) light conditions. Do incubation steps in the dark.

See [AlphaScreen Read Mode on page 53](#).

E

Emission Spectrum Scan

An emission spectrum scan measures fluorescence or luminescence across a spectrum of wavelengths. Fluorescent reads use the emitted light from a fixed excitation wavelength. The default value reported for each well is the wavelength of maximum emission in either RFU for fluorescence mode or RLU for luminescence mode.

See [Excitation Spectrum Scan on page 200](#).

Endpoint

In an Endpoint read, a reading of each microplate well is taken in the center of each well, at a single wavelength or at multiple wavelengths. Depending on the read mode, raw data values are reported as optical density (OD), %Transmittance (%T), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU).

See [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#).

Excitation Spectrum Scan

An excitation spectrum scan measures fluorescence at a single emission wavelength for the emitted light across a spectrum of excitation wavelengths. The default value reported for each well is the wavelength of maximum fluorescence excitation in RFU.

See [Emission Spectrum Scan on page 200](#).

F

Fluorescence

Fluorescence occurs when absorbed light is re-radiated at a longer wavelength. In the Fluorescence Intensity (FL) read mode, the instrument measures the intensity of the re-radiated light and expresses the result in Relative Fluorescence Units (RFU).

The governing equation for fluorescence is:

$$\text{Fluorescence} = \text{extinction coefficient} \times \text{concentration} \times \text{quantum yield} \times \text{excitation intensity} \times \text{pathlength} \times \text{emission collection efficiency}$$

See [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#).

Fluorescence Polarization

Fluorescence polarization detection is similar to fluorescence intensity, with the important difference that it uses plane-polarized light, rather than non-polarized light. Plate readers measure FP of the sample by detecting light emitted both parallel and perpendicular to the plane of excitation.

By using a fluorescent dye to label a small molecule, its binding to a different molecule of equal or greater size can be monitored through its speed of rotation.

See [Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode on page 48](#).

Fluorophore

A fluorophore is a material that absorbs light energy of a characteristic wavelength, undergoes an electronic state change, and instantaneously emits light of a longer wavelength.

See [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#), [Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode on page 39](#), and [Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode on page 48](#).

G

G Factor

The G factor, or grating factor, is used in fluorescence polarization to correct polarization data for optical artifacts, converting relative mP data to theoretical mP data. Optical systems, particularly with reflective components, pass light of different polarization with different efficiency. G factor corrects this instrumental bias.

See [Data Reduction on page 51](#).

I

Imaging

Imaging read mode does whole-cell imaging assays.

Whole-cell imaging assays are cell-based, or object-based, rather than the single-point measurements found in other types of microplate reads. These types of assays can yield more biologically meaningful results that can discriminate the fluorescence related to objects, such as cells or beads, from the bulk solution within a microplate well.

See [Imaging Read Mode on page 59](#).

K

Kinetic

In a Kinetic read, the instrument collects data over time with multiple readings taken at regular intervals.

The values calculated based on raw kinetic data include VMax, VMax per Sec, Time to VMax, and Onset Time. Kinetic readings can be single-wavelength or multiple-wavelength readings.

See [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#).

L

Luminescence

Luminescence is the emission of light by processes that derive energy from essentially non-thermal changes, the motion of subatomic particles, or the excitation of an atomic system by radiation. Luminescence detection relies on the production of light from a chemical reaction in a sample.

See [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#).

M

Membrane

The Membrane read type is used for a time-resolved fluorescence reading of a Western Blot membrane.

See [Membrane Read Type on page 24](#) and [Western Blot TRF Read Mode on page 56](#).

O

Optical Density (OD)

Optical density (OD) is the quantity of light passing through a sample to a detector relative to the total quantity of light available. Optical Density includes absorbance of the sample plus light scatter from turbidity and background. You can compensate for background using blanks.

A blank well contains everything used with the sample wells except the chromophore and sample-specific compounds. Do not use an empty well for a blank.

Some applications are designed for turbid samples, such as algae or other micro-organisms in suspension. The reported OD values for turbid samples are likely to be different when read by different instruments.

See [Absorbance Read Mode on page 25](#).

P

PathCheck Technology

The temperature-independent PathCheck[®] Pathlength Measurement Technology normalizes your absorbance values to a 1 cm path length based on the near-infrared absorbance of water.

The Beer–Lambert law states that absorbance is proportional to the distance that light travels through the sample:

$$A = \epsilon bc$$

where A is the absorbance, ϵ is the molar absorptivity of the sample, b is the pathlength, and c is the concentration of the sample. The longer the pathlength, the higher the absorbance.

Microplate readers use a vertical light path so the distance of the light through the sample depends on the volume. This variable pathlength makes it difficult to do extinction-based assays and also makes it confusing to compare results between microplate readers and spectrophotometers.

The standard pathlength of a 1 cm cuvette is the conventional basis for quantifying the unique absorptivity properties of compounds in solution. Quantitative analysis can be done on the basis of extinction coefficients, without standard curves (for example, NADH-based enzyme assays). When using a cuvette, the pathlength is known and is independent of sample volume, so absorbance is directly proportional to concentration when there is no background interference.

See [PathCheck Pathlength Measurement Technology on page 26](#).

Photomultiplier Tube (PMT)

A Photomultiplier Tube (PMT) is a vacuum tube that can detect light from dim sources through the use of photo emission and successive instances of secondary emission to produce enough electrons to generate a useful current.

R

Raw Data

Raw data is the signal reported from the instrument with no changes made. This is reported as optical density (OD), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU), depending on the read mode.

Read Mode

For more information on the supported read modes, see the following topics:

- [Absorbance Read Mode on page 25](#)
- [Fluorescence Intensity Read Mode on page 30](#)
- [Luminescence Read Mode on page 34](#)
- [Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode on page 39](#)
- [HTRF Read Mode on page 44](#)
- [Fluorescence Polarization Read Mode on page 48](#)
- [AlphaScreen Read Mode on page 53](#)
- [Western Blot TRF Read Mode on page 56](#)
- [Imaging Read Mode on page 59](#)

Read Type

For more information on the supported read types, see the following topics:

- [Endpoint Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Kinetic Read Type on page 22](#)
- [Well Scan Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Spectrum Read Type on page 23](#)
- [Membrane Read Type on page 24](#)

Reduced Data

Data reduction causes the raw signal values reported by the instrument to be calculated and displayed based on user-defined formula settings.

S

Spectrum

Depending on the read mode selected, a Spectrum read measures optical density (OD), %Transmittance (%T), relative fluorescence units (RFU), or relative luminescence units (RLU) across a spectrum of wavelengths.

See [Spectrum Read Type on page 23](#), [Emission Spectrum Scan on page 200](#), and [Excitation Spectrum Scan on page 200](#).

Stokes Shift

The Stokes shift is the difference between the wavelengths of the excitation and emission maxima, or peaks.

See [Emission Spectrum Scan on page 200](#) and [Excitation Spectrum Scan on page 200](#).

T

Time-Resolved Fluorescence (TRF)

Time-resolved fluorescence (TRF) is a measurement technique that depends on three characteristics that lead to better discrimination between the specific signal, proportional to the quantity of label, and the unspecific fluorescence resulting from background and compound interference:

- Pulsed excitation light sources
- Time-gated electronics faster than the fluorescence lifetime
- Labels with prolonged fluorescence lifetime

The time-gating electronics introduce a delay between the cut off of each light pulse and the start of signal collection. During the delay, the unspecific fluorescence (caused by test compounds, assay reagents, and the microplate) vanishes while only a small portion of the specific fluorescence from the label is sacrificed. Enough of the specific signal remains during the decay period with the added benefit of reduced background.

See [Time-Resolved Fluorescence Read Mode on page 39](#).

%Transmittance

%Transmittance is the ratio of transmitted light to the incident light for absorbance reads.

$$T = I/I_0$$

$$\%T = 100T$$

where I is the intensity of light after it passes through the sample and I_0 is incident light before it enters the sample.

W

Well Scan

A Well Scan read can take readings at more than one location within a well. A Well Scan read takes one or more readings of a single well of a microplate on an evenly spaced grid inside of each well at single or multiple wavelengths.

Some applications involve the detection of whole cells in large-area tissue culture plates. Well Scan reads can be used with such microplates to permit maximum surface area detection in whole-cell protocols. Since many cell lines tend to grow as clumps or in the corners of microplate wells, you can choose from several patterns and define the number of points to be scanned to work best with your particular application.

See [Well Scan Read Type](#) on page 23.

Z

Z'

Z' is the standard statistical parameter in the high-throughput screening community for measuring the quality of a screening assay independent of test compounds. It is used as a measure of the signal separation between the positive controls and the negative controls in an assay.

The value of Z' can be determined using the following formula:

$$Z' = 1 - \frac{3(SD_{c+}) + 3(SD_{c-})}{|Mean_{c+} - Mean_{c-}|}$$

where **SD** is the standard deviation, **c+** is the positive control, and **c-** is the negative control.

A Z' value greater than or equal to 0.4 is the generally acceptable minimum for an assay. Higher values might be desired when results are more critical.

Z' is not linear and can be made unrealistically small by outliers that skew the standard deviations in either population. To improve the Z' value, you can increase the quantity of label in the sample, if acceptable for the assay, or increase the read time per well.

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